

**THE BRETHREN IN CHRIST MISSION IN ZAMBIA, 1906-1978: A  
HISTORICAL STUDY OF WESTERN MISSIONARY LEADERSHIP  
PATTERNS AND THE EMERGENCE OF TONGA CHURCH  
LEADERS.**

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## ABSTRACT

The thesis explores and evaluates historically the development of leadership in the Brethren in Christ Mission among the Tonga people of Zambia. It investigates the western missionary patterns of leadership and the emergence of indigenous Church leaders. The thesis argues that the strategy of developing and deploying indigenous Church leaders was ambiguous, and resulted in delaying the indigenisation process. Having begun in 1906, the Brethren in Christ mission finally handed over leadership to indigenous Christian leaders in 1978. In part, this thesis is also an effort to write the history of the Brethren in Christ Church among the Tonga people in Zambia--a task previously unattempted.

The study utilises predominantly historical-narrative research methodology with a broad chronological outline of the period under consideration. This thesis is set out in seven chapters. The first and the last chapters represent the Introduction and Conclusion of the work. Chapter Two provides the socio-cultural background about the Tonga people of Zambia. Chapters Three to Six contain the principal subjects of the study, focussing on the patterns and types of leadership that emerged over the four epochs into which the study is divided: the Entry Stage (1906-1925), the Establishing Stage (1925-1948), the Equipping Stage (1948-1960), and the Handover Stage (1960-1978).

*The Entry Stage: Founding Leaders and African Assistants, 1906-1925* explores the beginning of mission work from 1906 to the departure of the most significant female missionary founding leaders. It examines the place of female missionaries and indigenous Christians in a predominantly male led mission work. The *Establishing Stage: the Emergence of African Church Leaders, 1925-1948* investigates the development of the early Africa Church leaders such as deacons, evangelists, and teacher-pastors. Recognising the inadequacies of secular education as a strategy for establishing churches, the *Equipping Stage: the Emergence of Trained African Church Leaders, 1948-1960*, introduced formal theological training that ushered in the ordination of church ministers and the emergence of the senior indigenous Church leaders such as District Superintendents (Overseers), the second most senior Church leadership role. *The Handover stage: Emergence of the First Zambian*



*Bishop, 1960-1978* saw the transfer of leadership from western missionaries to indigenous Christians.

The thesis concludes that while continuity and stability of local churches depended on the establishment of indigenous Church leaders, the pace of nationalisation of the church leadership was slow. Moreover, the handover of leadership from missionaries to indigenous Christians was generally not planned, but rather prompted by the prevailing nationalistic political climate of the 1950s and 1960s, and the indigenous desire for self-leadership. While revealing that the western mission had the power and authority to promote indigenous Church leaders, the thesis provides evidence that indigenous Christians played an equally significant role in urging the missionaries to hand over leadership. Areas for further research have been identified.

## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this thesis constitutes my own research and writing and it has not been submitted in any previous application for a degree. All quotations have been distinguished and the source of the information acknowledged

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Lazarus Phiri

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Date

## DEDICATION

To  
Rachel Melhorn Phiri,  
My wife and Missionary Leader  
&  
Jeremiah and Immanuel loving sons  
And missionary children

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Ultimately, to God alone be the glory!

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### **List of Abbreviations**

ANC	African National Congress
AJET	Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology
BIC	Brethren in Christ
BICWM	Brethren in Christ World Mission
BSAC	British South African Company
CMS	Church Missionary Society
E. V	Evangelical Visitor
FMB	Foreign Mission Board
MCC	Mennonite Central Committee
PA	Pennsylvania
SCM	Student Christian Movement
SDA	Seventh Day Adventist
SPCK	Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge
SVM	Student Volunteer Movement
TEE	Theological Education by Extension
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UNIP	United National Independence Party
WSCF	World Student Christian Federation

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# CHAPTER 1

## The Nature of Study, Scope and Research Methodology

The time scale of the work of the Brethren in Christ (BIC) mission in Zambia stretches from 1906 to 1978. The historical narrative begins in 1906, the year when two female missionaries, Frances Davidson and Adda Engle, and their two African counterparts, Ndhlalambi Moyo and Gomo Sibanda, entered Northern Rhodesia from Matopo BIC mission in Southern Rhodesia. They established the first mission station at Macha. The historical account ends in 1978 with the appointment of the first African to the post of Bishop, the highest church office.

### ***1.1. Objective of the Study***

The objective of this study is to describe and historically explore the trends of missionary leadership and indigenous church leaders among the Tonga people of Zambia. It will trace the stages and the dynamics of missionary leadership in relation to the development of indigenous Christian leaders. Within the historical framework of the BIC, the study will pose some pertinent questions relating to the evolution of mission and church leadership, the answers to which constitute the main themes of the thesis:

- What was the significance of the established leadership structures and patterns among the Tonga people, and how did the BIC missionaries negotiate them?
- To what extent were female missionary leaders accommodated in the largely male missionary dominated leadership structure?
- How did BIC mission strategy impact the development of the indigenous church leaders?
- What were the contributing factors of the shifts at various stages in the training strategy of indigenous Church leaders?
- To what extent did the socio-political dynamics of colonialism and nationalism impact the pace of indigenisation of leadership among the Tonga people?



## 1.2. Context of Study

Zambia is the primary geographical context for the study. Zambia is located in central southern Africa. It shares borders with eight neighbouring countries: Angola, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi, Tanzania, and Democratic Republic of Congo (former Zaire). Zambia's missionary legacy includes the notable Scottish missionary-explorer, David Livingstone (1813-1973), whose life and death motivated early Christian missions in central Africa.<sup>1</sup> Although Zambia and Northern Rhodesia remain the primary context, reference will also have to be made to Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) which was the original place of operation and the headquarters of the Brethren in Christ Mission in Africa.

Other early Christian mission efforts were undertaken by organisations such as the Brethren in Christ World Mission (BICWM) from North America. They started their work about a hundred years ago in Cape Town, South Africa. The BIC mission first initiated their work among the Tonga<sup>2</sup> people of southern Zambia in 1906, when they established the Macha mission.<sup>3</sup> Almost a hundred years later, the BIC mission work has increased numerically, yet without proportionate leadership development.

The main demographic focus of this study will be the Plateau Tonga people who inhabit the Batoka Plateau in the Southern province of Zambia. They are known as Plateau Tonga because of the geographical location where they reside. The Plateau Tonga people that constitute the focus of this study are to be differentiated from the Valley Tonga who reside in the Gwembe Valley on the periphery of the Tonga habitat. There are several similarities between the two Tonga groups such as rites of passage from birth to death. Polygamy is common to both. Both groups are matrilineal tribes. However, they differ from each other in terms of both geographical location and linguistic identity. The family names reveal the group to which they belong. For example, a person named *Siakabole* would originally be from the Valley Tonga people, while the Plateau Tonga people would call him *Hasikabole*. This variation is phonetic.<sup>4</sup>

It was mainly among the Plateau Tonga that the BIC undertook its mission in Zambia, although it also affected some other related peoples because the Plateau Tonga were not an isolated group. They had strong cultural links with other

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<sup>1</sup> E. Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa*, SPCK, London, 1995:140

<sup>2</sup> W. V. Brelsford, *The Tribes of Zambia*, The Government Printers, Lusaka, 1961

<sup>3</sup> Robert I. Rotberg, *Christian Missionaries and the Creation of Northern Rhodesia, 1880 -1924*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1965:153

<sup>4</sup> Zachariah Mulenga, *Interview*, September 2003, Member of the Mudenda clan of the Macha area.

peoples, including the Ila. While concentrating mainly on the Plateau Tonga, these other related groups will also be taken into account in the course of this study.

The BIC mission has its historical roots in the Anabaptist tradition.<sup>5</sup> The Anabaptists were a radical Protestant ritualist group that emerged in central Europe during the 16<sup>th</sup> century Reformation, insisting on the practice of adult baptism including the rebaptism of converts who had already been baptised at birth (the term “Anabaptist” meaning “one who baptises again.” Their religious orientation is characterised by a strong emphasis on personal faith in Jesus Christ that criticised ritual formalism, encouraged personal judgement in matters of belief, and opposed any relationship of church to state. They were committed to creating egalitarian Christian communities who lived a communal ethic of non-violence.<sup>6</sup>

## **1.2. Literature Survey**

### **1.2.1 Mission Theories of the Study of Indigenisation**

This thesis offers itself as a study in the indigenisation of the church. While it is not the intention of the author to engage in a comprehensive analysis of the indigenisation of the BIC among the Tonga people, it will explore the stages that led to the development of indigenous leadership. It does so within the trajectory of the “three self” movement that, from the time of 19<sup>th</sup> century mission theorists and strategicians, such as Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson, encouraged the growth of indigenous churches that would be

visibly and effectively self-governing, self-propagating, and self-supporting, rather than subordinate to expatriate missions and missionary leaderships.<sup>7</sup>

Another writer building on the “three-self” mission theories was John Nevius, a missionary for many years under the Northern Presbyterian mission in Shantung, China. The three pillars of Nevius’ plan included self-support in local churches from the very beginning, with priority on focussed Bible training for volunteer pastors,

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<sup>5</sup> A. Potter, “Swiss Anabaptism and the Sword,” *Anabaptism Today*, Autumn, 1998: 17

<sup>6</sup> A. E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1993:10

<sup>7</sup> W. R. Shenk, *Henry Venn Missionary Statesman*, Orbis, Maryknoll, New York, 1983:158

and distinct standards in Christian conduct that represented a complete break from so-called non-Christian practices.<sup>8</sup>

It is Roland Allen who challenged the mission station approach that separated missionaries from the indigenous Christians. In his classic book, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?*, he argued that Paul's missionary method of establishing churches and appointing leaders over them almost immediately should be normative for the modern missionary movement. He further argued that the nature and complicated organisational structures of foreign missions and mission-dominated churches were self-perpetuating in terms of missionary leadership, and kept missionaries from retiring. To overcome this problem, the goal of indigenisation should be "the spontaneous expansion of the church," and accordingly Allen did not believe in a dependence stage in which the converts were denied self-leadership.<sup>9</sup>

While advocacy of the "three self" character of indigenised churches has found much support in missiological writing, it has also been criticised by theorists such as Beyerhaus and Lefever, for example, who argue that it is an insufficient definition of an indigenous church, and at worst infects them with the western values of selfhood, self-reliance, and individualism.<sup>10</sup>

Harold Fuller provides a more descriptive sketch of the stages of indigenisation. While not proposing a blueprint for the indigenisation process, he identifies the stages by which leadership is transferred from missionaries to indigenous Christians church leaders. He assumes that the missionary starts the work, and becomes the initial leader. The missionary then gradually develops indigenous Christians into leaders, taking into account factors of partnership and the participation of the missionary even after indigenous Christians have taken full control of the local churches. According to Fuller one of the characteristics of an "indigenous Church" is that nationals lead the work, including work that may continue to be undertaken by foreign missionaries.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> J. L. Nevius, *The Planting and Development of Missionary Churches*, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, Philadelphia, 1958

<sup>9</sup> R. Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1962: 146-151

<sup>10</sup> P. Beyerhaus and H. Lefever, *The Responsible Church and the Foreign Mission*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1964: 16, 151

<sup>11</sup> H. Fuller, *Mission and Church Dynamics*, William Carey Library, Pasadena, 1980: 266

Another argument that is influential in the theoretical shaping of this thesis is set forth by Stanley Soltau in his book, *Missions at Cross Roads*, published in 1954. Soltau argues that the missionary should relinquish the leadership when indigenous Church leaders are ready. However, the down side to this proposition is that the time for leadership handover is usually uncertain. As long as missionaries have delayed in handing over leaders, the tendency has been that they continue to dominate the life and decisions of the national Church.<sup>12</sup> The roots of this tendency lie, in Soltau's analysis, in that fact that most mission organisations have emphasised evangelism at the expense of the training of indigenous church leaders.<sup>13</sup> Against this historical tendency, he argues strongly that the development of the indigenous messenger is equally as important as the propagation of the message, indeed essential for the continuing propagation of the message after the expatriate messenger has withdrawn. The neglect either of these two factors hampers the progress and growth of the indigenous Church.

### 1.2.2. Contextual Study on Indigenisation

In addition to these general studies of the contextualisation of Christian leadership, this thesis has taken particular account of several studies of the indigenisation of the church in Zambia itself, concentrating on the larger denominations of the Catholic Church and the Reformed Church in Zambia.<sup>14</sup> Verstraelen Gilhuis' book, *From Dutch Mission Church to Reformed Church in Zambia*, highlights the role and place of indigenous agents, and demonstrates the tendency of undermining of indigenous clergy in mission history literature.<sup>15</sup> F. J. Verstraelen study of *An African Church in Transition* explores the transition of the Catholic Church from its missionary beginnings to the nationalisation of its leadership. Rotberg's *Christian Missionaries, and the Creation of Northern Rhodesia, 1880-1924*, discusses the socio-political perspective of mission work, and addresses the question of indigenous identity.<sup>16</sup> Peter Snelson, in his book, *Educational Development in Northern Rhodesia 1880-*

<sup>12</sup> T. S. Soltau, *Missions at Crossroads*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1954: 69

<sup>13</sup> T. S. Soltau, *Missions at Crossroads*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1954: 21

<sup>14</sup> F. J. Verstraelen, *An African Church in Transition*, Development Research Institute, Tilburg, and Inter-University Institute for Missiological and Ecumenical Research, Leiden, 1975; G. Verstraelen - Gilhuis, *From the Dutch Mission Church to Reformed Church in Zambia*, 1982

<sup>15</sup> Gerdian, Verstraelen - Gilhuis, *From the Dutch Mission Church to Reformed Church in Zambia*, T. Wever, Franeker, Netherlands, 1982: 21

<sup>16</sup> Robert I. Rotberg, *Christian Missionaries and the Creation of Northern Rhodesia, 1880-1924*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1965: 127

1924, shows the indispensable role of missionary education in the development of Zambia's early human resources and leadership in particular.<sup>17</sup> These texts provide the broader background information on the subject of indigenisation within which the present study of BIC is set.

More general discussions of indigenisation in Africa with which this thesis engages include Peter Williams's study of the Church Missionary Society (CMS),<sup>18</sup> in which he surveys 19<sup>th</sup> century missionary strategy, drawing comparisons among the several societies in which the CMS worked, and reaching the conclusion that most CMS missionaries lacked cultural sensitivity. Bolagi Idowu has focused his studies on the challenge of indigenisation in Nigeria, in the context of which he makes an urgent call for the self-reliance and identity of indigenous Christianity.<sup>19</sup> Lamin Sanneh's *Translating the Message*, addresses the issue of indigenous agency, propounding the thesis that the missionary translation of the Bible into vernacular languages illustrates the power of "translatability" that, by definition, instates indigenous leadership. He argues that indigenous Christians are as indispensable to the on-going work of evangelisation, as translation of the Bible into indigenous languages has been, and remains to the Gospel's penetration of indigenous cultures.<sup>20</sup>

The literature referred to above indicates the breadth and substance of the subject of indigenisation both in general missiological discussion, and with reference to Africa and Zambia in particular. It provides the theoretical horizon within which present research has been undertaken, and within which this thesis has been written on the development of leadership within the context of the BIC mission.

Attempt has been made to analyse African leadership models among the Tonga people. One way of doing this has been an examination of the rites of passage as models of leadership. James Cox has edited a useful collection, *Rites of Passage*<sup>21</sup>, which provides information on transitions at critical points in African life. Additionally, the study uses ethnographic research of some selected local chiefs and headmen of southern Zambia. Interviews with Tonga chiefs provided necessary

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<sup>17</sup> Peter Snelson, *Educational Development in Northern Rhodesia 1880 – 1924*, Kenneth Kaunda Foundation, Lusaka, 1974: 60

<sup>18</sup> C. Peter Williams, *The Ideal of the Self-Governing Church. A Study in the Victorian Missionary Strategy*, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1990:74.

<sup>19</sup> B. Idowu, *Towards an Indigenous Church*, Oxford University Press, London, 1965.

<sup>20</sup> Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message -The Missionary Impact on Culture*, Orbis, New York, 1989:164.

<sup>21</sup> James, Cox, L., *Rites of Passage in Contemporary Africa*, Cardiff Academic Press, Cardiff, 1998.



information on traditional leadership models. This thesis has attempted to further relate such and other data to the subject of leadership.

Additionally, the information on the Zambian tribal culture reflected by the Tonga of the Southern province has been partly drawn from sources such as Brelsford's book, *The Tribes of Zambia*,<sup>22</sup> and the extensive work of Edwin Smith<sup>23</sup> who studied the Ila people of the same region and traditional roots.<sup>24</sup> His findings have been substantiated by the researcher's own ethnographic research. This thesis has drawn much of its anthropological insights from the writings of Elizabeth Colson in her various periodical articles and books.<sup>25</sup>

### **1.3. Importance of the Study**

There has been previously no written history of the mission work of the Brethren in Christ church in Zambia that has focussed on the development and role of indigenous Church leaders. The originality of this thesis is that it attempts to analyse this aspect of the history of Brethren in Christ mission in Zambia.

Various histories of the Brethren in Christ denomination of North American, such as Sider's *My Story, My Song*, include biographical studies of the lives of missionaries sent both to Africa and India.<sup>26</sup> However, Sider presented an exclusively western report of the missionary role in the BIC, to the exclusion of indigenous church workers. Engel's book, *There is No Difference*,<sup>27</sup> includes some of the early Tongan perspectives, but subordinates the indigenous to expatriate influences. Moreover, both texts are general narratives of the life and work of Brethren in Christ Mission work in Africa and India. This thesis seeks to avoid the opposite extreme of exclusivity – i.e. the analysis only of the role of indigenous Church workers, and offers a critical account of BIC history in Zambia that embraces both expatriate and

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<sup>22</sup>W. V. Brelsford, , *The Tribes of Zambia*, The Government Printers, Lusaka, 1961.

<sup>23</sup>E. W. Smith, *The Golden Stool*, Edinburgh House Press, London, 1927.

<sup>24</sup>E. W. Smith, *Knowing the African*, Lutterworth Press, London, 1946.

<sup>25</sup> E. Colson, *The Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1962; E. Colson, "Residence and Village Stability Among the Plateau Tonga", in *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal*, No. 12, 1951; E. Colson, "Role of Cattle Among the Plateau Tonga", *Rhodes-Livingstone Journal*, No. 11, E. Colson and M. Gluckman, *Seven Tribes of the British Central Africa*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1959.

<sup>26</sup> E. M. Sider, *My Story, My Song*, Brethren in Christ World Missions, Brethren in Christ World Missions, Grantham, 1989.

<sup>27</sup> A. R. Engle, J. A. Climenhaga, and L. A. Buckwalter, *There is No Difference*, Evangel Publishing House, Nappanee, Indiana, 1950.

indigenous elements. It thus aspires to correct a history that sidelined the indispensable role of the emergence of indigenous Church leaders.

The thesis has focussed on Church leadership rather than a general narrative of Christian leadership for several reasons. Firstly, the mission work in Zambia was focussed on establishing the local church. Therefore, the issue of Church leadership is of paramount importance. Secondly, it was the head of the church on the mission field who directed all other mission-related work, including health and education sectors. Thirdly, the ultimate visible sign of indigenisation was later identified by the presence of the senior Church leader rather a teacher or medical doctor or worker. The indigenous leaders understood the local customs and culture of the indigenous context and people. The indigenous leaders were thus able to assist the missionaries in their early efforts of mission work, and continued the work started by western missionaries.

Therefore, this thesis has attempted to record the establishment of the Brethren in Christ Church and its emerging leadership among the Tonga people in Zambia. The BIC mission was one of the comparatively smaller mission organisations, yet one of the earliest to establish Christian work in Zambia<sup>28</sup> in the second wave of mission organisations that entered Zambia after the year 1900.<sup>29</sup>

The Tonga people had traditional leadership structures prior to the coming of the BIC missionaries. One may deduce from such a long history that the Tonga people had well established cultural and traditional values.

Reflecting on the prevailing missionary practices of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Williams study of the CMS concludes that missionaries generally undermined indigenisation.<sup>30</sup> It could be argued that resistance of indigenisation was a feature of other Protestant missions too. This thesis will argue that, in the case of the BIC, the missionaries delayed handing over leadership to the indigenous Christians until 1978, by which time they had were reacting to socio-political forces of nationalism, rather than to missiological principle *per se* no.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> D. B. Barrett, *World Christian Encyclopaedia*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1982: 766

<sup>29</sup> P. Snelson, *Educational Development in Northern Rhodesia 1883-1945*, Kenneth Kaunda Foundation, Lusaka, 1974: 97

<sup>30</sup> P. C. Williams, "The Necessity of a Native Clergy, The Failure of Victorian Mission to Develop Indigenous Leadership", *Vox Evangelica*, 21: (1991): 33

<sup>31</sup> See chapter six (6) of this Thesis for detailed examination of the evidence and causes of the delayed indigenisation process of Church leadership.

Indigenisation and quest for identity are intertwined. The search for one inevitably gives rise to the other. This thesis will also explore the necessity for, and justification of an African identity in leadership of the African churches. Several African Christian theologians and missiologists share the concern about identity.<sup>32</sup> In Zambia, it is common to hear people remarking that Christianity is a 'white man's' religion, demonstrating that in the popular mind Christianity carries a Western cultural identity at the expense of an African image.

The nature of Christian missionary expansion has also been recognised as being cross-cultural. This study will foster a fresh attempt on the interface of culture and leadership in mission-historical context. Several books have been written regarding culture and mission,<sup>33</sup> as well as gospel and culture.<sup>34</sup> Few scholars however have specifically devoted effort on cross-cultural study of leadership.<sup>35</sup> In particular, there has not been any comprehensive research carried out on the historical-contextual leadership among the Tonga people of southern Zambia. This thesis will therefore give close attention to traditional leadership structures among the Tonga people prior to the coming of the BIC missionaries, with reference to their established cultural and traditional values.

#### **1.4. Motivation for the Study**

This historical study was motivated by the examination of prevailing mission and church leadership patterns. According to Cole, one of the critical issues that the Christian church in Africa faces today is the inadequacy of leadership.<sup>36</sup> At the root of this crisis is the vacuum that exists because the church needs larger numbers of leaders, or in many cases those of a higher calibre.<sup>37</sup> While Africa has some of the fastest growing churches, African churches yet lack sufficient trained leaders.<sup>38</sup> Byang Kato, an African theologian and church leader, has observed that the young

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<sup>32</sup> T. Tienou, "Which Way For African Christianity: Westernisation or Indigenous Authenticity?" *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology*, 10:2, 1991:3

<sup>33</sup> P. Hiebert, "Missionary and Anthropology: A Love/Hate Relationship," *Missiology* 6, No. 2, April, 1978:165-80.

<sup>34</sup> J. Stott and R. T. Coote, *Down to Earth: Studies in Christianity*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1980, See also R. Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, Faber, London, 1952.

<sup>35</sup> H. R. Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, Faber and Faber, London, 1962.

<sup>36</sup> V. Cole, "The Training of Leaders for Ministry: Implications for Theological Training," *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology*, 10:2, 1990: 33.

<sup>37</sup> W. Omulokoli, "Leadership Training in Africa," *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology*, 11:1, 1992: 13.

<sup>38</sup> R. J. Downey, *Ministerial Formation in Africa*, PhD Dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, 1985: 2.



church is inadequately prepared to face the challenges of other religions such as Islam and African Traditional Religions.<sup>39</sup>

Given the nature of cross cultural mission endeavours, including those of the Brethren in Christ Church, this thesis has considered the place of culture in the indigenisation of leadership. Christian mission has been cross-cultural in its impact and influence. Andrew Walls, one of the foremost modern mission historians, demonstrates that this phenomenon has been a feature of the Christian faith throughout its history; cross-cultural interaction, he argues, has been the means of both the propagation and survival of Christianity.<sup>40</sup> Walls' statement implies that the cross-cultural element is an indispensable feature of the development of Christian mission. This historical insight leads to the conclusion that all who engage in Christian mission must consider the vital relevance of culture. This can be either a vehicle or a stumbling block to mission endeavour. The mission-cultural encounter poses unique challenges. This thesis will show that this was the case with the development of indigenous leaders in the BIC Church in Zambia, as missionaries from one culture engaged with indigenous Christians from another.

The missionary perception of culture has always affected the process of indigenisation. Oosthuizen has argued that "Western ideology and scholarship often undervalue African cultural heritages." He further states that African thinking is perceived as primitive and traditional, while the western counterpart is regarded as civilised and modern.<sup>41</sup> The missionary enterprise has been accused of not fully engaging with the indigenous cultural needs. Western education and Christian influence have overlooked the significance of indigenous cultural roots in its approach to various forms of teaching and the development of indigenous leaders.

Historically, some Western missionaries, consciously or unconsciously perceived their culture as being superior to those of other cultures. Therefore, they assumed that other nations should learn the western culture.<sup>42</sup> Christianity and civilisation were thought to be inseparable. European civilisation was perceived as superior whereas other cultures were considered primitive. In some cases, they regarded civilisation to

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<sup>39</sup> B. H. Kato, *Theological Pitfalls*, Evangel Publishing House, Kisumu, Kenya, 1985: 16.

<sup>40</sup> Andrew F. Walls, "The Old Age of the Missionary Movement" *International Review of Mission* 77 (January 1987): 26, 27.

<sup>41</sup> G. C. Oosthuizen, "Indigenous Christianity and the Future of the Church in South Africa," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, January, 1997:8-12.

<sup>42</sup> R. A. Nisbet, *History of the Idea of Progress*, Heinemann, London, 1980:308.

be almost as sacred as the propagation of Christianity.<sup>43</sup> It will be argued in this thesis that such perceptions hindered missionary progress in the indigenisation of leadership in the BIC in Zambia, since it proved an impediment to mutual learning.

Regarding the place and role of the indigenous peoples in the African context, Lamin Sanneh wrote that "African agency in the dissemination of Christianity is a major category in the transmission of the religion."<sup>44</sup> Indigenous Christians, he demonstrates, though not well acknowledged in mission historiography,<sup>45</sup> played a major role in the advancement of mission enterprise. These neglected indigenous Christians provide the actual leaders of the mission church. The continuity of the church therefore depends on the effective establishment of sustainable indigenous leadership.

### **1.5. Methodology of the Study**

The study has utilised a historical approach with missiological and cultural considerations. This task has been accomplished through the survey of literature, ethnographic research, and archival sources. Given the fact that much mission history has been written largely from a Euro-centric point of view, the ethnographic field study has sought to balance the mission story.<sup>46</sup> Written or reported documentary sources such as books and minutes of meetings inevitably have some biased perspectives.

The researcher has attempted to explore the leadership transition in the Brethren in Christ (BIC) mission church by examining its history. His aim has been to discover and critique the leadership strategies that, over the period of the research, were

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<sup>43</sup> J. D. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York, 1991:275.

<sup>44</sup> Lamin Sanneh, "The Horizontal and the Vertical in Mission: An African Perspective", *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 7, No. 4, October 1983:167.

<sup>45</sup> P. Denis, *The Making of an Indigenous Clergy in Africa*, Cluster Publications, Pietermaritzburg, 1995: 135, See also J. F. Ade Ajayi and E.A. Ayandele, (eds.) *The Church Crossing Frontiers: Essays on the Nature of Mission*. Lund, Uppsala, 1969: 90. Not all writers have denigrated the African contribution, e.g. Steigerwald p. 129. Cf. J.H. Olsen, *Kristus i tropisk Afrika - i spaendingsfeltet mellem identitet og relevans*. Uppsala 2001.

<sup>46</sup> Gerdian Verstraelen- Gilhuis, *From the Dutch Mission Church to Reformed Church in Zambia*, T. Wever, Franeker, Netherlands, 1982: 19. Verstraelen-Gilhuis suggests that oral sources are more authentic compared to missionary written reports.

practised in the Mission and Church. An essential element of this research has been to analyse the type of methods missionaries used to train the indigenous leaders.

### 1. 5.1. Historical Approach

The historical method has enabled the researcher to anchor the study in a particular period and context. The study has been developed through the thematic, narrative and life history approaches. This approach includes broad historical epochs, as presented in Chapters Three to Six.

#### 1.5.1.1. Historical Narrative

The study has adopted the historical narrative approach for the purpose of exploring sequential experiences of the development of leadership in the BIC mission church. Susan Chase in her article, *Taking Narrative Seriously*, justifies the importance of the narrative approach thus:

By analysing the complex process of narration in specific instances, we learn about the kinds of narrative that are possible for certain groups of people, and we learn about the cultural world that makes their particular narratives possible and problematic in certain ways. The significant point here is that the general (cultural and discursive resources and constraints) is not fully evident to us in advance; we know the general fully only through its embodiments.<sup>47</sup>

Historical narrative gives careful attention to cultural considerations which, in the case of this research, has led the researcher to combine historical narrative with ethnographic analysis of the Tonga people and their customs. An attempt has been made to discover how cultural factors come to bear as the Tonga people engaged with BIC mission principles and practices. It will be shown that in some cases, the cultural orientation of the indigenous people was neglected or overlooked, while in others it was recognised and affirmed.<sup>48</sup>

#### 1.5.1.2. Thematic Approach

The historical narrative of this thesis has been divided into the selected time periods (see below). Within the context of narrative, attention has been given to providing accurate chronological data so that the reader is given a clear account of the

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<sup>47</sup> S. E Chase, "Taking Narrative Seriously," in *Interpreting Experience*, Vol. 3, *The Narrative Story of Lives* by R. Josselson and A. Lieblich (Eds.) SAGE Publications, London, 1995: 20

<sup>48</sup> E. Martey, *African Theology: Inculturation and Liberation*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York, 1993: 74

significant events that undergird the historical analysis. The primary aim of the research, however, is not to present a chronological account of the BIC mission, but to offer a thematic analysis of issues arising from BIC history that pertain the development of indigenous leadership. The thematic approach provides opportunities to explore leadership and other related themes such as the cultural and contextual setting of the Tonga people, Anglo-American cultural orientation, the BIC mission's development of leaders and the educational implications.

#### **1.5.1.3. Life History**

Some portions of the study have adopted the life history narrative, which is sometimes referred to as the biographical approach. The study of leadership involves the exploration of particular life stories of individuals and their influence on society. Such a study takes into consideration the contextual factors influencing leadership methods. This approach not only outlines the life of the individual through time, but also includes the individual's life in society, thus offering a complex sense of biographical patterning.<sup>49</sup> In this regard, some selected leaders were studied. It will be shown that these significant leaders at certain time periods defined the stages of development of the mission church.

#### **1.5.2. Missiological Consideration**

The missiological considerations enhance the understanding and implication of the church's philosophy and strategy of mission leadership development. The missiological reflection has been employed to help in the analysis of the interface of mission ideologies and indigenous cultural factors. To this end missionary attitudes and views have been examined.

#### **1.5.3. RESEARCH SOURCES**

##### **1.5.3.1. Archival Sources**

The research has been conducted primarily in Britain, USA, and Zambia. In Britain the researcher consulted the Brethren in Christ (BIC) mission in East London. In USA, the archives of the BIC Mission headquarters and Messiah College in

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<sup>49</sup> J. F. Gubrium, and J. A. Holstein, "Biographical Work and New Ethnography", in *Interpreting Experience: the narrative of studying lives*, London, Sage, Vol. 3: 47-48

Pennsylvania have been explored. In Zambia, three major mission stations (Macha, Sikalongo, and Nahumba) were visited for both local church and mission records.

The following primary sources were accessed by the researcher in the Brethren in Christ archival sources.

### **Evangelical Visitor**

This is the official periodical of the Brethren in Christ Church in North America. It has been in continuous publication in the USA from 1887, the year of its foundation, to the present. Until the 1980s it was published on a bi-weekly basis, but since then has appeared as a monthly paper. Every issue contains much material on overseas missions.

### **General Conference Minutes**

The General Conference is the governing body of the Brethren in Christ Church in North America. There is a complete set of these minutes, beginning in the 1880s. The Bishop's office in Zambia provided similar sources.

### **Minutes of the Foreign Mission Board**

Historically the Board has gone by various names, previously known as Foreign Mission Board and presently as the Board for World Missions. These USA based Board Minutes are available from the early 1900s to the present.

### **Handbook of Missions**

This contains reports from the various mission locations. For Africa, the handbook began as an official publication in 1918, but there are earlier reports in manuscript form and in the General Conference Minutes.

### **Missionary Diaries**

Various diaries of missionaries to Africa were consulted in the research process, including those of the founder of the mission, Frances Davidson (1898-1923) and Henry Brubaker, who was Superintendent of Africa (especially for the 1930s and 1940s).

## **Museums and Government Archives**

In addition, the author of this thesis visited local museums and government archives in Zambia to collect necessary data. This included the University of Zambia, Centre for African Studies.

### **1.5.3.2. Oral Sources**

Valuable as these archival sources are, they manifest a serious deficit in that they contain scarcely any input by, or reflection from the indigenous African community. The archival records give a selective picture of the BIC, principally from missionary perspective alone. In order to redress this serious lacuna, the researcher supplemented archival research with evidence drawn from oral sources. This was done through interviews with some older people who had lived through, and participated in the mission work during the period of research.

Open interviews were conducted, rather than pre-structured questionnaires. This method was preferred because it enabled the informants to express themselves in their own words, recollecting the activities and developments of the mission work. In this way, the informants recounted their memories, which are a valuable source for African historiography. The varied educational level of the informants was another reason for adopting the open method of interviews. By the use of this method, the researcher tapped into the already existing oral traditional method of passing on information used in most Africa contexts.

The informants included the indigenous clergy and laity both in Zambia and the USA. With regard to cultural and traditional data, informants were drawn broadly from both the church and secular society. Village headmen and chiefs, including women, were primary sources of information. The Bishop of the BIC church in Zambia agreed to make preliminary contacts with the above-mentioned informants.

Pictorial evidence was sought both through old photographs in mission archives and through pictures taken during the field research. This included the mission sites, grave yards and gravestones or pillars with related information.

### **1.5.3.3. Printed Sources**

Both historical and missiological sources (published and unpublished) were accessed through university libraries, especially the Edinburgh University Library and the



Andre F. Walls Library in the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World, New College. Inter-library loan facilities were used to acquire materials not readily available in Edinburgh.

Library research mainly focused on books, journals, dissertations, theses and conference reports. Computer sources such as the Internet were also utilised.

### **1.6. Organisation of the Study**

Within the seven chapters into which this thesis is divided, the original research is reported in Chapters Three to Six, each of which deals with a particular epoch within the seventy-two year period of the study as a whole, 1906 to 1978. These epochs have been determined on the basis of thematic stages in the development of mission and indigenous leadership. These are:

- The Entry Stage: Founding Leaders and African Assistants, 1906-1925
- The Establishing Stage: Emergence of African Church Leaders, 1925-1948
- The Equipping Stage: Emergence of Trained African Church Leaders, 1948-1960
- The Handover Stage: Empowering of the First African Bishop, 1960-1978

The *Entry Stage* represents the founding years of the BIC mission in Zambia, led by two female missionaries and two African counterparts. The stage concludes with the departure of one of the founding missionary leaders, by which time a basic school and preaching points has been established in the villages of the Macha area.

The *Establishing Stage* opens a new era of the BIC mission, with an enhanced mission strategy that included a deliberate focus on establishing local churches and appointing African deacons and evangelists. These African leaders were mainly informally trained, except for those teacher-pastors who carried out the double duty of teaching during the week and pastoring at the weekend.

The *Equipping Stage* introduces a paradigm shift in BIC mission strategy with the introduction of formally-trained African Church leaders. Missionary leaders began to establish Bible schools as training centres for pastors and other church workers. With further educational advancement and awareness of their church responsibilities, senior church members emerged in this period.

The *Handover Stage* represents the point at which the process of indigenisation of leadership became visible in the BIC mission among the Tonga. This concluding epoch coincided with the period of political liberation and nationalism in Africa, which impacted the missionary view of Africans and their capability to assume church leadership. The appointment of the first African Bishop in 1978 will mark the *terminus ad quem* of this chapter, and of the thesis as a whole.

The main line of argument that will be advanced in these central chapters is that the handover of leadership from missionaries to indigenous Christians was generally not planned, but rather prompted by the prevailing nationalistic political climate of the 1950s and 1960s, and the indigenous desire for self-leadership. While revealing that the western mission had the power and authority to promote indigenous Church leaders, the thesis will demonstrate that indigenous Christians played an equally significant role in urging the missionaries to hand over leadership. But the emergence of Tongan leadership will be analysed primarily in terms of what it illustrates of the indigenisation process of BIC among the Tonga people. While due attention will be given to BIC mission work in medical and educational institutions, the main focus of the thesis is upon the issues of leadership as the most visible expression of the indigenisation process.



## CHAPTER 2

### The Tonga Socio-Cultural Context

#### 2. 1. Introduction

This chapter is a narrative of the life and organisational leadership of the Tonga people. It offers an analysis of traditional leadership structures among the Tonga, and how they were impacted by their encounter with Western Christianity. It will be argued that this is an essential element in a historical reconstruction of the Christianization process among the Tonga people. Christianization cannot be studied exclusively in terms of the missionary narrative itself, but must be founded on a proper analysis of the social system of the indigenous people as subjects of the Christianisation process, not merely the “objects” of missionary concern.

Wilson and Hunter in their paper, “The Study of African Society,” emphasise this approach:

It is, for example common amongst social anthropologists that the tribe should be studied in its country home before its members are followed in the town; or again that pagan family life should be studied before Christian.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, this chapter offers a historical analysis of the Tonga socio-cultural context before the process of Christianization occurred. To achieve this goal, the social system of the Tonga people will be described and analysed in relation to the theme of leadership transition.

The Tonga people will be discussed in terms of their traditional styles and models of leadership, in the contexts of Tonga social relationships, organisations and attitudes. This follows Wilson and Hunter who have rightly pointed out that in society, people are not just heaped together; but relate to one another in coherent forms of groups and relations.<sup>2</sup>

The chapter will therefore describe the Plateau Tonga before their interaction with the West, beginning with the basic unit of the family and proceeding to the institution of the chieftdom. While archival sources do not go back to pre-colonial times, an

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<sup>1</sup> G. Wilson and M. Hunter, *The Study of African Society*, Rhodes Livingstone Paper, University of Zambia, Lusaka, 1964:2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

attempt has been made to reconstruct the account of the Tonga traditional life and leadership from selected anthropological and oral sources. One of the main sources of the information in this chapter is the ethnographic research published by Elizabeth Colson in her study of the Plateau Tonga in former Northern Rhodesia.<sup>3</sup> As noted in the Introduction, information based on neighbouring people related to the plateau Tonga, like Ila will also be taken into account.

## **2.2. Origin of the Plateau Tonga**

The Tonga speaking peoples are spread across what is now the southern province of Zambia, formerly Northern Rhodesia. They first settled around the Batoka Plateau. The name Plateau Tonga comes from the Batoka Plateau. This helps to differentiate them from other Tonga people, the Valley Tonga who settled on the Zambezi River valley. There are several related people groups that identify themselves as Tonga speaking peoples. Among these people groups are the following: Toka-Leya, Valley Tonga, Plateau Tonga, and We.<sup>4</sup> This chapter will focus on the Plateau Tonga who occupy Batoka basin, the area stretching from Kafue to Kalomo, known as the Mazabuka district.

Historically speaking, the earliest written records about the Plateau Tonga can be found in the writings of British missionary explorer, David Livingstone.<sup>5</sup> The Tongas are among some of the oldest people groups to settle in Zambia. The most probable origin of the Tonga is suggested to have been from the southern movements of Bantu peoples.<sup>6</sup> The majority of the people groups arrived in Zambia from the north by the renowned Luba Lunda migration. The Tonga, however, settled in the southern part of Zambia from the south.<sup>7</sup> They are estimated to have arrived in Zambia as early as 1200.

The pre-colonial and pre-Christian Tonga society has been portrayed in literature and ethnography as having a coherent structure and orderly leadership systems.<sup>8</sup> Some of

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<sup>3</sup> E. Colson, *The Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1962. This text is the main anthropological source of the data in Chapter Two.

<sup>4</sup> B. Tyrrell, *Tribal Peoples of Southern Africa*, Books of Africa, Cape Town, 1968: 29

<sup>5</sup> D. Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*, 1861, Ward, Lock and Company, London: 549-59

<sup>6</sup> P. E. N. Tindall, *History of Central Africa*, Longmans, London, 1968: 28

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*: 28.

<sup>8</sup> A. Wood, *Northern Rhodesia: The Human Background*, Pall Mall Press, London, 1961: 80.

the main elements of the Plateau Tonga society that display such structure and orderly leadership include traditional community, leadership, rituals, and religious specialisation. Later interaction with Europeans and other African people groups led to reformation, deformation and transformation of the early Plateau Tonga society.<sup>9</sup>

### **2.3 Tonga Traditional Community**

Several components or units of gathered relationships constituted the structure of the Tonga community. These included the following: the household, comprising a couple and children or dependants; the village, composed of several households and led by a headman; and chieftainship, consisting of several villages and led by a chief.

#### **2.3.1. The Traditional Household**

The smallest recognisable unit of relationships among the Tonga community was the household. It provided the primary form of traditional leadership. Some authors have attempted to differentiate between a family and a household.<sup>10</sup> However, for the purpose of this chapter, household and family are used interchangeably.

##### **2.3.1.1 Nature of the Traditional Household**

According to the Tonga, a household could be described as comprising a husband and wife/ wives with children. Colson refers to the household as the basic unit of Tonga social relationships. However, she observes that there does not seem to have been a single agreed terminology for the family unit. It is sometimes referred to as *mukwaashi*,<sup>11</sup> Though this denoted a man's family. The term *ingaanda* normally meant a house, but could be extended to refer to a household – i.e. the members and relationships of an extended family.

The apparent uncertainty as to what the household really meant may be linked to the perceived difference in the understanding of family between Westerners and Africans. In the African context, a family had always been the so-called extended family and not nuclear family as per western conception. Therefore, the terms nuclear and extended family are imported etymological words that refer to family. In this regard, the Tonga word, *ingaanda* encompasses the African extended family. A

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<sup>9</sup> E. W. Smith, *Knowing the African*, United Society for Christian Literature, London, 1946: 33.

<sup>10</sup> S. Shewmaker, *Tonga Christianity*, William Carey Library, Pasadena, 1970: 15.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*: 17.

family in an African context, and among the Tonga people in particular, included the so-called dependants. These are referred to in the Tonga language as *balelwa*.

The meaning of the term *ingaanda* is further clarified in the context of a polygamous marriage. Each wife and her biological children represented *ingaanda* (household). If a man had two wives, the first wife's household would be referred to as *ingaanda mpati*, while the second wife's household would be referred to as *ingaanda nshoonto*.<sup>12</sup> Where a man had more than two wives, the first wife's household would still be referred to as *ingaanda mpati*, while the remaining households would be referred to by the sequence of entry into marriage and position in the family. The rest of the wives' households would then be called *ingaanda yabili* (second household), and *ingaanda yatatu* (third household).<sup>13</sup>

Another contributing factor to the description of family could be the individualist and collectivist divide. Africans tended to be more collectivistic, while westerners tend to be more individualistic. However, both societies could have had the other elements manifested in small measures. African families were prone to be inclusive. For example, one's father's brother was referred to as father and not uncle. Uncle may have had connotations of being a little distant. The sons of two brothers would call each other brothers rather than cousins.

#### 2.3.1.2. Leadership of the Traditional Household

The traditional household provided the primary form of leadership. The leader of the Tonga household was normally a man. Though the Tonga people could be regarded as matrilineal, they were patriarchal in their leadership practice. In marriage, they tended to be more patrilocal than matrilineal. Patrilocal was the practice by Tonga men in taking their wives to their paternal family. Matrilineal referred to the practice of a man migrating to live with his wife's family. The man still assumed the headship or leadership of the household.

Within the framework of the household, there was specialisation of duties. Most domestic chores were done by female folk, while male members of the family carried

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<sup>12</sup> *Ingaanda mpati* literally means the house of the older wife and *ingaanda nshoonto* refers to the house of the younger wife.

<sup>13</sup> Pandey Siachaba, (Headmaster, Njase Secondary School, Choma), *Interview*, May, 2003

out the more mechanical and tool making duties. However, there were no strict rules that prevented people of varying gender from performing other duties, unless the matter belonged in the category of taboos. These divisions of work were meant to be complementary rather than exploitative. However, there would have been moments when this might have been abused in certain circumstances.

The issue of the relationship between male and female leadership will be one of the sub-themes running through the remainder of this study. Just as the Tonga tended to accord different roles to men and women, and reserved ultimate leadership to men, so too did the BIC within their church community. There were sometimes interesting parallels between Tonga and BIC assumption about male and female leadership.

#### *2.3.1.3. Relationships in the Traditional Household*

The relationships within the household varied from one age group to the other, for example, the parent - child relationship was normally hierarchical. Age was a major contributing factor in several other relationships among the Tonga people. Respect and preference were usually given to those of an older age group. In such a society, parents normally assumed the leadership role in the family. Parents would issue instructions to children with less discussion involved. By contrast, consultation would take place between spouses depending on the personality of the husband. We will see later that BIC mission policies sometimes reflected the traditional respect for age, and sometimes undermined it. By concentrating on schools for young people, and insisting on educational qualifications the BIC mission tended to give more power and authority to the young and educated.

Another factor in relationships was the gender of an individual. Male and female children were raised in separate groups. In a household, male and female would eat separately. Most of the social interaction would take place with persons of the same gender. Another activity based on the delineation of gender was the herding of cattle, which was done by boys. In some households, girls were not even allowed to herd or own cattle. Some male oriented skills such as the making of axes and hoes were learned by apprenticeship. This process mainly involved observation and hands-on training. Most of the industrial and social skills were passed on through the same process of interaction in specialised same gender affiliations.

Among siblings age and the gender of an individual played a significant role. The older son would most often assume formal leadership in the family in his father's absence. He was being groomed for future leadership in one form or another. In a society that looked to male leadership, a son normally was groomed for leadership. Nevertheless, women played a significant role. For example, the woman or sister in a family was the bearer of the next headman or chief. In a matrilineal society, the woman provided traditional and social stability. She was respected for her roles in the household, and in particular, motherhood.

The process and practice of authority and power among the Plateau Tonga was male oriented. In marriage, it was the male that was privileged in having more than one wife. He was honoured with the right of owning property such as cattle. The men of the household normally owned land and animals, which was the primary form of wealth in this society.

From an early age the Tonga were thus given stereotypical roles and expectations according to gender. Within the BIC, even in North America, there was something similar, although it operated in a different way. In both cases, the strategies and expectations affected leadership functions.

### **2.3.2. The Traditional Village**

A cluster of household huts formed the next unit of social relationships called the village. From the writings of early travellers, it is evident that villages and village headmen were in existence before the coming of the Europeans in 1890 into Northern Rhodesia. As early as 1888 Selous acknowledged having met a headman during one of his travels.<sup>14</sup>

#### ***2.3.2.1. Composition of the Traditional Village***

The village was traditionally referred to as the *muunzi*. In its physical appearance, the village was comprised of scattered huts within shouting distance from the hut or palace of the headman. From the beginning of the colonial period it seems that the Tonga attributed the size of a Tonga village to the conditions imposed by the civil administration. The minimum size of the village was based on ten able bodied male

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<sup>14</sup> F. C. Selous, *Travels and Adventures in South East Africa*, Rolland Ward and Company, London, 1893: 211.



taxpayers under one headman. Usually the composition of the Tonga village was restricted to members who had some form of relationship with the headman. There was normally a close-knit group of related individuals who settled in a particular village. According to Colson, the families and individuals who belonged to the village could trace their relationship to each other and to the headman in various ways. However, there were some exceptions to that rule. Some friends and other men who married into the kinship would be allowed to settle in the village. It was also common practice that Tonga men were at liberty to choose in which village to settle. At times, the Tonga men would voluntarily or involuntarily change villages. Some of the reasons for this change of residence were influenced by quarrels with kinsmen or lack of fertile land.<sup>15</sup>

Within the village, social community, age, and experience were considered important. The headman consulted with the older and experienced elders of the village. Since information and knowledge among Tonga were passed on by oral tradition, the custodians of such knowledge were usually the elders.

#### 2.3.2.2. *Leadership in the Traditional Village*

The headman was chosen by the chief in consultation with the informal counsel of village elders. In the colonial period, this was done with the approval of the civil government office, in the office of the District Commissioner. The headman was traditionally known as *sibuku*.

Kinship relationships and age were significant factors in the selection of a headman. It was the elders among the kinsmen who were consulted before the appointment of the headman. Under normal circumstances, the oldest and most experienced kinsman would be nominated for the position of headman. He then would assume leadership with the affirmation of the reigning chief. Once again, we see the importance of age in traditional Tonga leadership patterns.

With the changing socio-economic patterns after the arrival of the Europeans, traditional loyalty to the leadership of the headman began to be eroded. Educated and progressive young men tended to become less obedient in their loyalty to the

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<sup>15</sup> E. Colson, *The Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1962: 214.

elderly headman. Traditional headmen tended to be uneducated, and remained in the village to carry on the traditions of the kinship while younger persons went away to work in the growing urban centres and settler-owned farms. This transition, whereby younger people gained more power, was not restricted to village life. It would be paralleled in the BIC and other churches, where emphasis on education as a means of advancement meant more authority for younger people, and less for elder ones.

Traditionally, authority and power were vested in the position of headman as the custodian of traditional knowledge and experience. However, the subjects tended to have freedom of movement from one village to the other. Their loyalty was subjective and dependent on how they viewed a particular headman. According to Shewmaker, the headman had little formal power over his villagers. Nevertheless, the customary practice of reciprocal rights and obligations was one way the headman could respond to subjects who were not loyal. This involved denying a villager support at some critical moment of need as a punitive measure to rehabilitate the loyalty of the villagers. The headman had the power to deny the villager future assistance.<sup>16</sup> However, many villagers would respect the headman out of a sense of reverence for the ritual beliefs in traditional leadership. This practice of respect for traditional leadership translated into ancestral veneration. This was the remembrance of some ancestors who had great influence and impact on villagers before they died. The headmen, like other leaders such as chiefs, were normally among those venerated long after their deaths.

Another limit of the headman's traditional power and authority followed from the fact that his right and privileges were invested in him by the chief and colonial administration. This meant that his power and authority were limited, and exercised on behalf of the chief and the administration. Where the colonial administration governed through indirect rule, the headman carried out directives on its behalf. Such authority as he might have in addition flowed from personal qualities that he might have, that heightened his respect among his community.

There would be a parallel within the Church. The first Tonga BIC Christians to achieve even minor rank and status in the BIC would be given that rank and status by

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<sup>16</sup> S. Shewmaker, *Tonga Christianity*, William Carey Library, Pasadena, 1970: 15



the BIC missionaries. They would be 'created and raised up' by the missionaries in the same way as the headmen were 'created and raised up' by the chief and in the colonial period, the civil administration.

The method of indirect rule by the colonial administration sometimes caused divided loyalty in villages. Occasionally, the villagers obeyed the administration more than their traditional leader. The headmen, as well as the chief, were sometimes merely regarded as "government leaders" rather than traditional leaders because of the system of indirect rule. The village would only respect the headman appointed by the administration due to fear of punitive measures from the administration.

In some cases, the Tonga village was named after the headman. The kinsmen system of selecting the headman worked well to keep the legacy of that particular kinship. The name remained the same as long as the civil administration did not replace the headman.

The formation of the village during colonial times, as stated above, depended on the availability of a minimum of ten taxpayers. According to Tonga tradition, however, another way of becoming a headman was for a man to move into a new area. It was believed that the first man to move to a given area to establish a village was regarded as the owner of the area. Thus, he became the leader of those who came after him. He was called *ulyanika*, or *sikatongo*, "the owner" of the area. This designation was not necessarily equivalent to a headman, though at times the same man would later be recognised to be a headman. As noted above, the headman was appointed by the chief in consultation with a council of village elders, and approved by the administration.

Sometimes when a man moved into a new area, thereby becoming a leader, 'owner' and effectively a headman, it was because of tensions in the village in which he previously lived. These tensions would often be related to conflicts over leadership. A man of strong character who was having difficulties with his headman could become a leader and effectively a headman in his own right, by moving out of the village and becoming a founder of a new area.

### 2.3. 3. The Traditional Chieftainship

The third and largest socio-political entity of the Tonga community was the chiefdom, that denotes the wider community that recognised the authority of a single chief. The chiefdom typically comprised several villages. The most influential groups within chiefdom were the clan, the members of which were bound by common matrilineal links, the kinship, a matrilineal group of within the clan, related to the chief, from among whose nephews his successor is chosen. They played a major role in the preserving Tonga beliefs and customs, especially relating to the major transitions of life -- the rites of passage, taboos, and related rituals.

The matrilineal kinship, as the name suggests, is a group of members related through the biological links of their female parents or ancestors. Colson gives the following description of Tonga kinship:

The corporate kinship groups are much smaller bodies of kinsmen, which I refer to as 'matrilineal groups'. The Tonga words for such a group is *mukowa*. The same name is used for clan and has wider meaning of species, kind, sort, and type.<sup>17</sup>

Among many collective responsibilities and rights, the kinsmen were the group that selected the village headmen and chiefs. The rest of the people held them responsible for the decisions made either on behalf of the village or chiefdom. Some key members of the kinship were responsible for the appointment of the chief. They worked in collaboration with the elders from the clans in the surrounding villages. The position of a chief was the highest level of traditional leadership. There was no paramount chief.

The more militant people groups, like the Lozi, were in a position to form treaties with foreign European entities, whereas the Tonga who had no paramount chief, but relied on the village headmen of small fragmented villages, could not sign treaties at all. There was no unified leadership of a large group of people to demand such contractual expectations such as a treaty. Treaties were usually made only by larger, with well-established chiefdoms, like the Lozi, with an established paramount chiefdom.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> E. Colson, *Marriage and the Family Among the Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1958: 15

<sup>18</sup> B. Tyrrell, *Tribal Peoples of Southern Africa*, Books of Africa, Cape Town, 1968: 17

The chief's residence, known as the palace, was usually situated in a special, secluded area. In addition, the chief was surrounded by the royal members' housing. The palace also has a traditional local court. In most cases, the group's shrine was located in close vicinity. Members of the kinship worked closely with the chief. The palace was normally a community of the chief's close kinsmen and family. His family usually included a wife/ wives with children. This would include married children who had brought their wives to their father's village as was commonly practised.

The three main social entities, namely the family, village, and chiefdom usually had their own form of traditional leadership. The form of traditional leadership was established according to the Tonga customs. The traditional leadership organisation of the Tonga people would best be likened to a triangle with a superior chief at the apex. Under the chief was a group of senior headmen who, in turn, were in charge of other headmen. The headmen were leaders of villages.

If the highest individual office in the Tonga traditional society was the chief, the highest individual office in the BIC was the bishop. There is further parallel between bishops and chiefs. Although they were clearly the highest office in their respective organisations, they did not work alone. There were always groups or committees around them, and these had the real say in the decision-making processes. Tonga chiefs were assisted by their kinsmen and senior headmen.

#### *2.3.3.1. Historical Existence of the Tonga Chief*

It is clear that the Tonga chief existed before the coming of the Europeans to Northern Rhodesia. After the advent of the European civil administration, 'indirect rule' was introduced among the Tonga people. Mair, succinctly describes 'indirect rule' as "the progressive adaptation of native institutions to modern conditions."<sup>19</sup> Another social anthropologist defines it as "the system by which the tutelary power recognised existing African societies and assisted them to adapt themselves to the function of the local government."<sup>20</sup> From the above selected definitions of 'indirect rule' it is fair to deduce that its introduction was an acknowledgement by the colonial

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<sup>19</sup> L. Mair, *Native Policies in Africa*, Negro Universities Press, New York: 56

<sup>20</sup> Lord Hailey, *An African Survey*, Oxford University Press, London, 1938: 413

government that traditional leadership was pragmatically effective, and although from the western modes of leadership, could be harnessed to the latter and modified to conform more closely with them.<sup>21</sup> Indirect rule worked well as a means of indirect domination of the traditional institutions. Through such a system, the civil government controlled the existing natives or indigenous people within minimum disturbance of their existing customs.

Indirect rule functioned both to strengthen the significance of indigenous leadership, but also to undermine the traditions on which it stood. Some chiefs were victims of divided loyalty. They struggled to find the balance between fulfilling the demands of the colonial administration and the traditional expectations of the Tonga people. The traditional chieftainship, as a leadership institution, has survived to this day because it is rooted in the African Tonga traditional customs. It does not operate in isolation from the broad spectrum of Tonga traditional beliefs and customs.

## **2.4. Formation of Tonga Traditional Leadership**

Traditional leadership among the Tonga people took various forms depending on the particular socio-political entity. Apart from the already identified socio-political entities of family, village and chiefdom, there were the traditional religious specialists. The process of assuming leadership in these various entities differed from one entity to the other.

### **2.4.1. Traditional Leadership in the Household**

According to the Tonga informants, leadership started at the basic social unit known as the family.<sup>22</sup> The leader of the family was usually the husband. The recognition of the husband as leader of the family came from the traditional practice of gender roles. The specialised gender roles had been in existence before the advent of the Brethren in Christ missionaries.

The leadership skills were usually acquired by informal means of apprenticeship, observation, and imitation. Within the Tonga family context, the male child was

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<sup>21</sup> Indirect Rule affected traditional leadership. For further discussion on the subject, see Chapter Three.

<sup>22</sup> Chief Chikanta, *Interview*, Chikanta's Palace, October, 1999

groomed for male leadership of the family. According to African forms of learning, apprenticeship not only included development of trade skills, but leadership skills too. The male child learned the expectations and responsibilities of family leadership by observing the father's role. Informally, the young people learned by imitation. One of the practical traditional experiments of gender and leadership roles among the Tonga people was the customary practice of *maantombwe*.<sup>23</sup> This involved boys and girls establishing makeshift structures where they acted out the roles of husband and wife. The much younger ones played the role of adopted children. Both boys and girls practised their roles as husband and wife, including the necessary tradition chores done in a household.

Although much freedom was given to this traditional practice, premarital sex was forbidden. On the one hand, the boys were encouraged to display skills for providing food, and shelter for the family through activities such as hunting. On the other hand, the girls were encouraged to demonstrate domestic skills such as cooking and nurturing the children at home. The parents were supportive and provided some basic necessities such as foodstuffs.

The *maantombwe* cultural practice used to take place immediately after the harvest period, but before cultivating and planting season.<sup>24</sup> These *maatombwe* activities successfully completed, parents would brew beer to mark the end of the traditional practice. The elders of the village monitored the activities.

In the development of family leadership skills, there was continuous interaction between father and son. In instances where families had moved to join the matrilineal kinship, uncles provided the male role model. A son usually looked up to the father or any other respected male role model in the nearby household until he got married. After marriage, the son would consult with the older men.

Leadership in the family came with responsibilities and privileges. The head of the household was expected to lead by way of providing the necessities of life. These

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<sup>23</sup> M. C. Muleya, *Interview*, Muleya's Homestead, October, 1999. The information that follows is all based on the interview with Mr. Muleya

<sup>24</sup> The traditional calendar for after harvest activities was later to be affected by the coming of the Christian missions. For further discussion, see Chapter Three on *The Entry Stage: Founding Leaders and African Assistants, 1906-1925*.

necessities would include food, clothing, and shelter. For example, men were responsible for the building of huts and hunting for food. Decision-making and resolution of family problems were the responsibilities of the husband. Husbands consulted with their wives though not openly.

The expectations and modes of Tonga leadership were based on mutual understanding and benefit. Care for the family was a basic expectation and responsibility of the husband. Male dominated leadership would sometimes place the women in a disadvantaged position. The role of women in the household was usually that of submission to the husband or father. Male leadership was sometimes abused depending on the individual's personality.

Age was a significant factor in the children's relationships in a particular household. The older children tended to be given responsibilities and privileges over the younger ones. The daughter would assist the mother in caring for the young siblings. The son would normally be involved in herding the family cattle. The older boys would also accompany their father on hunting trips.

The development of family leadership was through apprenticeship, observation and imitation. Given the fact that Tonga traditionally practised male leadership, the men performed active (direct) leadership while the less exposed women performed passive (indirect) leadership. The leaders of various households later formed the male group from which a village headman was appointed.

#### **2.4.2. Traditional Leadership in the Village**

The village headman was the most common public figure of the Tonga traditional leadership. As observed earlier in this chapter, the chief in consultation with the council of elders of a particular village appointed every headman. After the coming of the European colonial administration, the District Commissioner had to approve the appointment of all headmen.

Traditionally, the position of a headman was inherited through the matrilineal system of Tonga custom. In the event of the death of a headman, one of the nephews -- normally the son of the sister to the late headman -- would succeed him. However, there were special cases when a leader of a household decided to establish a new



village. This happened at times when there were disputes in a particular village. The forming of such villages became more prevalent when the Europeans came to the then Northern Rhodesia. The European administration, which was responsible for approving the appointment of a headman, had specific requirements for the formation of a village, particularly those moving from one village to the other. According to Colson:

If a man wishes to form a new village, he must find nine other tax-paying males-that are able-bodied men over the age of eighteen-who will join with him and accept him as their headman before he will receive recognition by the administration. However, the administration reserved the right to accept or reject the secession of leaving the old village short of taxpayers. These are the official limits placed upon the formation of new villages and the movement of men from one village to another.<sup>25</sup>

Despite the fact that the European administration demanded ten taxpayers per village, this condition did not undermine the traditional customs required by the Tonga matrilineal kinship. The headman was nominated by his own kinsmen, appointed by the chief and later approved by the colonial administration. The kinsmen had to accept the headman as their leader. He was nominated by consensus of the council of elders in the village. These elders represented the members of the village.

In a male dominated society, the women played a passive role in the process of appointing of a headman. However, there were two ways by which Tonga women could influence the appointment. Firstly, it was the women who produced the heir to leadership. It was a nephew who was the son of the former headman's sister. In the matrilineal kinship, a son could not inherit the leadership of his father. Secondly, women though passive in the selection process were nonetheless significant resource people in giving advice to the headman. The sister and auntie of the late headman were often consulted on major decisions of the village. The headman usually consulted his sisters. Furthermore, before a headman left his village he would confide in his sister. One such headman used to pass between the legs of his sister before leaving the village. This custom is still observed to this day in some parts of the Tonga Plateau.

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<sup>25</sup> E. Olson, "Residence and Village Stability Among the Plateau Tonga", *Rhodes - Livingstone Journal*, No. 12, 1951: 48

The matrilineal kinsmen played a major role in the selection of the traditional leaders among the Tonga. They had the obligation and responsibility of nominating both the headman and the chief.

### 2.4.3. Traditional Leadership in the Chieftdom

The position of a chief was the highest level of traditional leadership among the Tonga. It has been claimed that there were no chiefs among the Tonga people before the coming of the westerners.<sup>26</sup> The travel records of missionary explorer David Livingstone demonstrate the historical evidence that the Tonga people were living in scattered hamlets. In his brief contact with the Valley Tonga, Livingstone alludes to meeting with “a Batoka chief” named *Sinamaneni* in his 1851 travel records.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the current chief, Chikanta, alluded to the fact that when the Europeans first arrived in his area in 1890, they found the seventh (7th) chief Chikanta leading the local people.<sup>28</sup> It is not clear what they were called at that time.

The Tonga people did not have a paramount chief. The predatory warrior ethnic groups such as the Lozi, Ngoni, and Bemba usually had paramount chiefs. It was not clear whether or not the militancy of an ethnic group determined the presence of a paramount chief. However in the above examples, it seems evident that the militant ethnic groups usually had a paramount chief.

#### 2.4.3.1. Nature of the Chief's Position

The Tonga chief presided over a collection of senior village headmen, known as *sibuku*. He was the head of about ten villages or village headmen. He was perceived as a guardian of the clan of a given area. Tonga people addressed their chief by the title *mwami*. This title also came to mean “lord” or “king”. Therefore, it was equally used in religious ceremonies when addressing the divine being.

The chief was chosen by his own people through a nomination process of the matrilineal system in the same way a headman was chosen. The chief was usually a member of the matrilineal kinship. It was rare that someone outside the kinship

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<sup>26</sup> E. Colson, *The Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1962: 207.

<sup>27</sup> S. Shewmaker, *Tonga Christianity*, William Carey Library, South Pasadena, 1970: 10

<sup>28</sup> Chief Chikanta, *Interview*, Chief Chikanta's Palace, October, 1999



would succeed a chief. The rare occasions occurred if no suitable or willing kinsmen were available to take the position of a chief. Traditional leadership within the matrilineal kinship was largely based on seniority of age, varying personal qualities, and wealth.<sup>29</sup> The remaining kinsmen acted as a support group in times of crisis.

#### 2.4.3.2. *Qualification of the Traditional Chief*

Among the qualifications of the traditional leadership, age was perceived as important. Seniority in age was seen as a sign of wisdom. It was believed that the longer a person lived, the wiser he or she became, and the greater the knowledge he or she had acquired. Seniority of age also implied that one had acquired a longer period of experience in life. Since knowledge was transmitted by oral tradition, length and breadth of experience was decisive in the accumulation of knowledge and wisdom.

Another qualification highly considered was the personal qualities such as how well one related to different people. This included problem solving and promotion of unity among the followers. One Tonga informant commenting on the personal qualities made the following observation:

The Tonga traditional leadership style did not favour strong and militant skills. Tonga leaders were recognised in society because they were able to bring families together. Anyone who was more accommodating, to as many people as possible.<sup>30</sup>

Such leadership quality of uniting the people was key to traditional Tonga leadership, particularly in the area of decision-making. In Tonga, traditional leadership decision-making was done by consensus of the council of elders rather than directives from the chief.<sup>31</sup>

Furthermore, wealth was a significant factor. Society tended to respect the person who acquired more wealth. In the case of the Tonga people, cattle were considered an important sign of wealth. The more wealth a person had, the more influence he or she exerted on the people in the community. In some instances, it was the wealthy

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<sup>29</sup> E. Colson, *The Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia*, Manchester University Press, Manchester 1962: 21

<sup>30</sup> E. Shamapani, *Interview*, Choma, September 1999.

<sup>31</sup> A. S. Wood, *Northern Rhodesia, The Human Background*, Pall Mall Press, London, 1961: 82

kinsmen who periodically established new villages. They normally would be headmen of those new villages.

#### **2.4.3.3. Appointment of the Traditional Chief**

According to the current Chief Chikanta, Tonga traditional leadership qualifications include ability to lead, relate, accommodate, and accept the people one leads.<sup>32</sup> In the event of the death of a Tonga chief, both the clan and the kinship are under obligation to decide the successor to the position. The process of appointing a Tonga Chief entails two factors, namely kinship and clan.

#### **1. The Kinship Stage**

The appointment of a new chief was the responsibility of the kinship group within the clan. This was a matrilineal group belonging to the royal line of the chief. They were responsible for choosing among themselves the next chief. In accordance with the matrilineal system of succession, the only eligible candidates were the nephews of the dead chief. It was the task of the kinship to decide which of these nephews was to be chosen as the new chief.

The process of selection involved a series of deliberations, the purpose of which was to eliminate candidates by consensus. The elderly members of the kinsmen took the lead in the discussions, on account of their age, experience and wisdom. According to a Tonga informant, the elders would discuss their observations about the various nephews from the time of their youth.<sup>33</sup> By ranking candidates in this way, less qualified nephews were eliminated, and the consensus of the elders would settle on the best qualified who would then be accepted by the whole community. Consensus thus had an essential role preserving the harmony of a collectivist society.

#### **2. The Clan Stage**

The next stage in the appointment of a new chief was for the kinsmen to present the nominated nephew to the clan. The clan would be represented by its senior headmen (*sibuku*) from the representative matrilineal families. It was the responsibility of the *sibuku* to approve the nomination of a chief from the kinsmen. This approval process was usually a formality, since there were prior

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<sup>32</sup> Chief Chikanta, *Interview*, Chikanta's Palace, October, 1999

<sup>33</sup> Chief Chikanta, *Interview*, October, 1999

consultations before the name was finally presented to the senior headmen. The nomination was followed by some consultative discussions, which were the last stage of appointing the chief.

Once the kinship's nomination had been thus approved, the installation ceremony for the chief was organised. One of the senior headmen presided during the ceremony. The neighbouring chiefs were invited to attend, and be introduced to the new chief. This was important as the way of the new chief being acknowledged by other chiefs, and included as being of recognised status with them.<sup>34</sup>

#### *2.4.3.4. The Training of a Chief*

Traditionally, the training of a Tonga chief took the form of apprenticeship. This training was acquired by observation and imitation. The newly appointed chief had a group of senior headmen who worked closely with him. The senior headmen acted as counsellors and consultants.

Regarding decision-making, the chief depended on the wisdom and long experience of the senior headmen. The chief's subjects usually brought their cases for deliberation to the chief through the senior headmen. They were not allowed to approach the chief directly with their problems. The chief's advisers would then discuss the matter with the chief on the subjects' behalf. Thus informed through collective consultation with the headmen, the chief would reach a decision in respect of the case presented to him, and the headmen would communicate it back to the subject.

Communication with the chief took a special form. According to Shamapani:

One could not go to the chief within the same day to present a case. One would not get immediate attention. The word was passed on to the chief in advance. Then the chief would consult with his advisors before responding to the particular case. The chief would not accept any form of visit without prior notice. The only exception was in the case of routine visit, where one wanted to pay homage or courtesy call to the chief. Other than that, the chief needed to know in advance.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Chief Macha, (with headmen, in a Focus Group), *Interview*, October, 1999

<sup>35</sup> E. Shamapani, *Interview*, Nahumba Mission, Bishop's Residence, September, 1999.

There was great advantage in knowing the case in advance. The chief used the time to consult with counsellors. In addition, this process assisted the chief in avoiding unnecessary mistakes in decision-making. Furthermore, the chief was able to utilise the experience and wisdom of the elderly senior headmen who might have had some previous experience in dealing with similar problems. It illustrates the importance of consultative leadership with regard to decision-making in the traditional Tonga leadership.

Apart from acquiring experience in decision-making, the council of senior headmen preserved and transmitted the historical knowledge of the Tonga ethnic group to the chief. The process depended entirely on oral tradition, and the corpus of knowledge thus preserved and transmitted was never committed to writing.

It was important for the chief to be well informed concerning the heritage of the Tonga ethnic group. It was particularly vital for the chief to know the roots of the matrilineal kinship. Kinship links, which determined the village residences, were essential for the chief's knowledge of his larger community. Another piece of historical knowledge important to the chief was the line of succession of the chief of his clan and the Tonga ethnic group. This type of knowledge was communicated over a long period of deliberated and focussed discussions with the senior elders and the female relations of the chief.

#### *2.4.3.5. The Role of Women in Selecting a Chief*

It has already been shown that the matrilineal traditions of the Tonga people demanded that succession to the chief was restricted to one of his the nephews of the previous chief. According to this Tonga tradition, the seed of a woman (chief's sister) was the rightful heir to the throne. The Tonga believed that the child born of a woman was a more trustworthy heir than one descended from a male relative. It followed therefore, that the child born of a sister was more readily accepted because a woman has the more certain knowledge of the conception of her baby. This reasoning was further affirmed by Chief Chikanta's remarks:

You couldn't question what a daughter produced. A son's offspring would be doubted. It was the sisters who produced chiefs. The only one who knew for sure was the woman. She was the one who conceived the child and thus there was no room for speculation.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Chief Chikanta, *Interview*, Chikanta's Palace, September, 1999

Over the years, the Tonga people have relied on this process of recognising the sister's offspring as a true heir to the throne. It is accepted as the surest way of assuring the blood line of the chiefly family in a society that accepts polygamous marriage. That the offspring of a chief's sister would bear a direct blood relationship with the chief was clearly more certain than it would be in the case of a brother with more than one wife. The bloodline of a sister was more certain. It did not matter who the father of the next heir was as long as the woman was a sister of the late chief.

The woman's role did not end with the conception and delivery of an heir to the throne. The reigning chief informally consulted his sister and mother. The wife of the previous chief was a valuable source of information regarding the rituals and rites of the Tonga people. It was believed that women were better custodians of Tonga traditional knowledge.<sup>37</sup> Though she would take background role in public, the chief's sister was the closest person to the reigning chief and observed all the deliberations of the work of the chief. The eldest sister of the chief was therefore expected to bear the next kinsman to the throne.

## **2.5. Rites of Passage and Traditional Leadership**

Among the most significant rituals practised and observed by the Plateau Tonga were the rites of passage. In their original form and intent, these rites were a means of equipping and enabling the growth process of the Tonga as passed from one stage of life to another. The rites of passage were a significant aspect of socio-cultural life of ethnic societies. Specifically, rites of passage accorded Tonga people with responsibilities and privileges. In some cases, particular rites of passage such as marriage ushered some into positions of leadership. The role of the key participation of elders gives the observer insight in leadership formation and functions of the Tonga.

Some writers have identified rites of passage as types of life cycle rituals.<sup>38</sup> The term "rites of passage" was coined in 1908 by the anthropologist Arnold van Gennep in

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<sup>37</sup> E. Shamapani, *Interview*, Bishop's residence, Nahumba Mission, September, 1999.

<sup>38</sup> J. Cox, *Rites of Passage in Contemporary Africa*, Cardiff Academic Press, Cardiff, 1998: x

his work entitled *Les Rites de Passage*.<sup>39</sup> It refers to the ritual events associated with various social changes that are seminal to the experience of so-called preliterate societies. It has become the standard way of identifying the stages by people pass from one stage of life to another, through rituals that engage both individuals and the community of which they are part.<sup>40</sup>

While western scholars have normally set the study of rites of passage in the context of the social sciences, especially anthropology, African theologians recognise that rites of study have profound religious and theological significance. For example, the prominent West African theologian, Mercy Oduyoye, emphasises that "time given to the study of rites of initiation and reconciliation in African societies, of the relationship of persons to the communities, is time well spent."<sup>41</sup> She rightly points out that traditional understandings of social relationships are embedded in rites of passage, that serve both as a source and an authority of social relationships.

We shall therefore examine the principal rites of passage that can be observed among the Plateau Tonga.

### 2.5.1. The Birth (Naming) Ritual

In African society, and among the Tonga people in particular, the birth of a child was a corporate and collective task and responsibility. One of the African theologians, John Mbiti alludes to this fact:

The birth of a child is therefore the concern not only of the parents but also of many relatives including the living and the departed. Kinship plays an important role here, so that a child cannot be exclusively 'my child' but only 'our child'.<sup>42</sup>

This was equally true of the Tonga people, among whom the rite of birth is a communal affair, devised to welcome and incorporate the newborn child to the clan community. It is a ritual that confers status and identity on the child, while at the same time affirmed its parents and the clan community of which their family is part.

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<sup>39</sup> A. van Gennep, *Rites of Passage*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1960. (As indicated in the main text, the book was first published in 1908, then later translated in English by Monica Vizedoma and Gabrielle Caffee.)

<sup>40</sup> D. Davies, "Christianity", in Holm, J., *Rites of Passage*, Pinter Publishers, London, 1994: 2, 41

<sup>41</sup> A. M. Oduyoye, *The Will to Arise: Women, Tradition, and the Church in Africa*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York, 1992: 4

<sup>42</sup> J. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, Heinemann, Oxford, 1969: 107



The main participants in this ritual were the older women. More specifically, the significant duties were the responsibility of the grandmothers from both sides of the family. A grandmother took the role of a mid-wife. In the case of the first child, a grandmother or any older woman of the community instructed the new mother. The instructions included taking care of the baby, and her sexual relationship to the husband.

The naming rite takes place about a week after the baby is born. Birth is referred to by the Tonga words *kuzyala*, that denotes the whole birth process, and *kutumbuka*, the act of giving birth itself. The naming of the new-born child is known as *kuulika* or *kupa nguli*. The 'nguli' was a family name given to the newborn child. Two names (one from the father's side and another from the mother's side) of either some deceased relative or those still alive are carefully selected - according to the significance of those persons in the family.<sup>43</sup>

The midwives were normally elderly women such as grandmothers or aunts with considerable experience. Sometimes when a female child was born, she would be given the name of whoever served as midwife during their birth. The midwife (for a female child) had the privilege to give the name of another significant person in the family. However, it was believed that if the newborn child persistently cried after the naming ritual had been done, the elders concluded that the name had been rejected; it implies that the child's ancestral spirits were not happy with the name and wanted a different one.

The splashing/spiting of water was usually a symbol of authorising, or passing on the new name and in a sense introducing the new child to his/her ancestors and welcoming the ancestral spirits to participate in the new life.

The clan name was sometimes referred to as a 'soul name'. This was a name that was never changed as one grew up. One carried this name through life. Not even marriage could change the clan name. In most instances, the name carried some religious and ancestral significance.

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<sup>43</sup> M, Kalembo and F. Kaluba, *Interview*, November, 2000.

The rite was carried out in the early morning hours of the day. The purpose was to keep in contact or connect with the ancestors. This was a demonstration of the communality of the ceremony. Both the living and the dead were involved.

From the above description, one notices the role and place of age and status of participants in the society. The ritual is undertaken by elders for the benefit of the whole community. The new mother would then look up to these elders in raising the child. In this sense the child was raised in and by a community.

### **2.5.2. The Initiation Ritual**

The initiation rite, known among the Tonga as *inkolola*, ushers an adolescent into adult responsibility and privilege. Commonly referred to as the puberty rite, in some societies the ritual is carried out before the actual biological age of puberty. The essence of the rite is primarily to demonstrate that a child is maturing from childhood to adulthood. It symbolises the end of childish behaviour and passage to manhood and womanhood.

The Tonga people practised an initiation rite, which was also known as *ukuyaluka*, meaning 'to come of age'.<sup>44</sup> However, some selected clans did not perform elaborate ceremonies. Where traditional ceremonies were not carried out, Tonga people usually communicated the necessary instructions through informal meetings organised by older women of the community. There are no official initiation rituals for boys, who are inducted into adulthood in a less formal way than girls. The emphasis is put on the exposure to, and development of skills, the instructions being given by uncles in the matrilineal clan. They did not conduct circumcision.<sup>45</sup>

The initiation ceremony for girls was an occasion for the communal neighbourhood celebration. The girls' initiation rite took place outside the village. When a young girl had started her first menstrual cycle, she would report this to one of the elderly women such as an auntie or grandmother. Then the other women - including her mother - would be informed. Subsequently, a date was set for the initiation ceremony and all the other people in the village were informed. For a period of two

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<sup>44</sup> Chief Macha, *Interview*, September, 1999

<sup>45</sup> M, Kalembo and F. Kaluba, *Interview*, November, 2000



weeks, the girl would be secluded in her own room. A number of older women (usually an auntie) were assigned to counsel her on a daily basis.

During that time, the girl was completely covered and not allowed to see anyone else apart from the women who were counselling her and a few selected elderly women. She was also given a special red-brown powder, which she smeared on her whole body. This special powder was for purpose of making her look more attractive when she came out of the initiation house.

The girl's family would choose an initiation guide or counsellor known as *nakalindu*.<sup>46</sup> The counsellor acted as a teacher and sponsor of the girl. In addition, the counsellor took the role of a guardian during the period of isolation.

The selection of the initiation counsellor was based on age, knowledge, and experience. The girl's family looked for a woman of good reputation and character from the community. The traditional instructions were given by both the older girls, who had been through the initiation and the selected counsellors. Like the birth rite, initiation rite displayed the usual communal element of the Tonga social relationships. It was the privilege and responsibility of the community to educate the girl. The initiation ceremony was celebrated by drinking, dancing, and eating. Some gifts were given to *nankolola* (initiate), which she shared with the *nakalindu*

The girls were taught domestic skills. The instruction consisted of matters of housework, and marital relations. Like in other African societies, the Tonga girls were instructed in areas concerning how to care for their children and husbands. The care for the child or children was an important aspect of initiation instruction. Instruction was not based on verbally communicated lessons, but on practical demonstration of how duties were carried out in the home. The girls learned by observing and imitating what the older women demonstrated. They were expected to pattern their lives on the model of the counsellor or those who had already passed through initiation.

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

The Tonga people did not practice female circumcision (clitoridectomy). Therefore, they did not observe a long waiting period of seclusion since there was no healing process. The main critical period of initiation took about a week. In the absence of physical circumcision, the initiation ceremony concluded with a celebration by community women. This was primarily women's function. The initiation did not involve any male participants.

The initiation rite was aimed at preparing the adolescents for adulthood. Respected and qualified elderly persons of the community conducted the education and training process. These persons were expected to be older, thus more mature and experienced. Age and experience were two of the most vital qualifications. It was believed that older age was a sign of wisdom. It followed that the longer one lived, the more knowledge he or she acquired. One would observe that this was not the case in all situations, thus the need for the selection process. In addition, the initiation rite among the Tonga tended to be more for the girls than for the boys. There seemed to have been an imbalance in the preparation of girls and boys for adulthood. The irony was that the male became the leader of the home in marriage while the female a custodian of traditional values. Tonga people, whether male or female, traditionally tended to have marriage as their ultimate goal.<sup>47</sup> Full participation, socially and religiously, in Tonga's society was done through the basic unit of social relations, namely marriage.

### **2.5.3. The Marriage Ritual**

The marriage rite is called *mucado*. It marks a major transitional rite into the realm of the adult life of procreation. Marriage and bearing children (known in Tonga as *lukwato*) are phenomena expected of every Tonga person.<sup>48</sup> Barrenness is regarded as abnormal. In addition, marriage formed a primary forum for ancestral religious worship, a tradition of remembering the 'living dead'. The household thus becomes the basic unit of Tonga society, with marriage as its sustaining relationship. The marriage ritual comprised a variety of activities from preparation to actual consummation. The marriage rite tended to be an extended process over a long period of time.

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<sup>47</sup> L. Shamapani, *Interview*, Nahumba mission, September, 1999

<sup>48</sup> M. Kalembo and F. Kaluba, *Interview*, November, 2000

The elders of the clan were responsible for selection of the spouse in a traditional system of arranged marriages. The elders from the two families negotiated on behalf of the girl and the boy, having first proposed that they made a suitable match.

Residence in most marriages was virilocal, meaning that the man went with the wife to his matrilineal clan.[Lazarus – you will know better that I, but are you sure that “virilocal” means the man going to his wife’s home? The word would rather suggest the opposite – *vir* in Latin meaning “man”.] The young couple was then required to build their hut near an established or older family. The process was known as *kulelwa*, meaning ‘to be cared for.’ One of the implications of this was that the new wife did not cook on her own. She had no hearth.<sup>49</sup> The couple remained dependent on the older family for some time.

During the early period of their marriage, the new couple’s home would not yet have a place for ancestral veneration. The only *muzimu* (spirit) that had been appeased was that from the woman at the time of betrothal, the spirit that was evoked when releasing her into married life when the man’s family finally paid the *ciko* as a form of dowry. This comprised the payment of about four heads of cattle. The full payment of dowry in effect transferred the wife from her matrilineal group to that of her husband, to which thereafter he was entitled to regard her as belonging. One of the implications of this act was that the husband’s family assumed the authority of appointing a successor in the event of the husband dying, to continue the household begun by the deceased. In addition, the final payment of the *ciko* signified the acceptance of the marriage by both family clans. It was an important step in establishing a permanent union. The dowry or bridewealth was a form of compensation given by the husband’s family to the wife’s family. The fact that it was paid in cattle signifies the high value attaching to livestock among the Tonga.<sup>50</sup>

The payment of *ciko* was followed by a ceremony in which the grandmother gave the woman in marriage. The grandmother spat water on the ground as a sign of venerating the ancestors. She then made a pronouncement on behalf of the ancestors to release the woman into marriage. All married women of the wife’s clan attended

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<sup>49</sup> E. Colson, *The Plateau Tonga*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1962: 48

<sup>50</sup> E. Colson, “The Role of Cattle among the Plateau Tonga”, *The Rhodes Livingstone Journal*, No. 11: 24

the ritual. When a woman was released in this traditional way, the family regarded itself as being duly honoured. This ritual ended with the pronouncement of a blessing from the ancestors, without which a married woman would be regarded a failure by her clan.

After the rite was complete the man would then build a more permanent structure for his home. His first house was normally called the house of his father. This was where he dedicated his father's spirit (*muzimu*) as a special guardian of his wife and children. In the case of a polygamous marriage, the house of a subsequent wife would be placed on the left side of his initial house. This later became the house of the matrilineal kinsmen.<sup>51</sup> When the matrilineal relatives visited, they would lodge there. Both kin groups had to be appeased throughout his life.

The marriage ritual involved older members of the community as guides and models of matrimonial relationships. A grandmother usually emerged as a key and authoritative player in the marriage rite. She had the responsibility of handing over the woman into marriage. In addition, the community participated through celebration and moral support. The marriage rite was the ultimate rite of passage for the living.

#### **2.5.4. The Death Ritual**

Death rituals in Tonga culture mark the solemn departure from the 'living' to the 'living dead'. Just as marriage was a corporate ritual, death was a community responsibility. The death rite was known as *indilwe* or *malila*.<sup>52</sup>

Among the Tonga, death is known as *lufu*, and is regarded as a mystery. On the one hand, it is considered as the departure from the physical life, yet on the other hand, it is the arrival to the spirit world. In that regard, death does not end the continued communion between relatives. The living still communicate with the living dead through veneration of ancestors.

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<sup>51</sup> E. Colson, and M. Gluckman, *Seven Tribes of the British Central African*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1959: 148

<sup>52</sup> M. Kalembo and F Kaluba, *Interview*, November, 2000

When a member of the family died, all members of the clan needed to be informed before the burial. In most cases, the eldest kinsman was responsible to ensure that all significant clan members were present. Clan members attended to issues of inheritance. The dead body was kept in the house of the deceased.

Tonga tradition has it that men and women face different directions during the funeral ceremony. In the case of the death of a spouse, the surviving husband or wife must walk around the grave, and then lie face down as a sign of final sexual intercourse. The funeral ceremony continues with the mourners gathering at the deceased person's house. Before the mourners disperse, a cleansing ritual (known in Tonga as *kusalazingwa*) is conducted. Several days after the burial, the kinsmen of the deceased choose a man or woman to perform the ritual. To fulfil the cleansing requirements the surviving spouse sleeps with either the sister or brother of the deceased. This was done to keep the spirit of the deceased from haunting the remaining spouse. It is believed that if the sexual act is not performed, then the remaining spouse would go mad. Therefore, the sexual act is performed to protect the surviving spouse and appease the dead. However, there was an alternative ritual called *kucuta*, which did not involve any sexual activity. This ritual was performed just as an imitation of the sexual act coupled with herbs.<sup>53</sup>

In general, the death rite required animal sacrifice performed before the cleansing process. A cow would be killed as a blood sacrifice for the purpose of appeasing the living dead. It denotes the acceptance of the deceased to the world of the living dead, and serves as a form of protection of the remaining community so that the spirit of the dead person would not haunt them. Exclusively older men performed this ritual unlike most other Tonga rituals that are undertaken by older women.

## **2.6. Traditional Religious Specialists**

The three rites of passage discussed above indicate that the whole life cycle of the Tonga people is full of religious significance, and is accompanied by religious ceremonies or rites. As the historical anthropologist, Edwin Smith, pointed out in his study of the Ila people, who share linguistic relationships with Tonga:

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<sup>53</sup> M Kalembo and F. Kaluba. *Interview*, November, 1999

...as you get to know the Africans, you find religion everywhere; not as an organised cult separable from the rest of their life, but as part and parcel of it, all-pervasive, motivating, controlling, guiding, and strengthening.<sup>54</sup>

It is therefore understandable that Tonga society has traditional specialists responsible for the proper conduct of these ceremonies. Among them, are the medicine men, women, and rainmakers, known traditionally as *ulanyika*, who performed such rituals.<sup>55</sup> These religious specialists assumed traditional leadership roles recognised by their respective communities.

### 2.6.1. Nature of Tonga Religious Practices

Fundamental to Tonga religion is the belief in a Supreme Being and the veneration of ancestors. Tonga people believe in God but experience Him as being far distant from human beings, approachable only through intermediaries, of whom ancestors are the most important. Regarding this aspect of religious belief, Edwin Smith commented:

Most [people] believed that his [God's] functions were carried out by the tribal ancestors, who continued their interest in the tribe, and at whose shrines propitiatory sacrifices had to be offered. It was generally believed that the punished offenders were against the tribe by bringing disease and disaster to cattle and crops. They were another factor in maintaining cohesion in the tribe.<sup>56</sup>

Ancestors therefore play a vital role in Tonga culture as the "living dead" who form a bridge between the unseen world and the world of mundane existence of human life. The ancestors are venerated because they are perceived to play a mediating role between their human kinsmen and God who is believed to have withdrawn to a great distance.<sup>57</sup>

Respect and veneration of the ancestors is practiced both individually and corporately. Individual married adults perform domestic religious rituals, where the

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<sup>54</sup> E. Smith, *Knowing the African*, United Society for Christian Literature, London, 1946: 101

<sup>55</sup> E. Colson, *The Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1962: 217

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* 83

<sup>57</sup> S. Shewmaker, *Tonga Christianity*, William Carey Library, South Pasadena, 1970:30



husband, as head of the basic social unit, provides primary religious leadership.<sup>58</sup> But at the collective level ancestral veneration is performed by specialist religious leaders, *ulanyika*, who are believed to have particular powers that can be used in such calamities as droughts or famine. These are the rainmakers and/or shrine priests,<sup>59</sup>

### 2.6.2. Expression of Tonga Religious Practices

Tonga religious life is performed in various institutionalised locations, the most important being the traditional shrine where communal prayers and other forms of celebration are observed. The maintenance of cohesion in the clan is achieved by voluntary co-operation in ritual participation, sacrilege of a shrine being a punishable offence.<sup>60</sup> The shrines came into existence in several ways. Some shrines were established at the former *ulanyika*'s grave and others were located at the entrance of the village. The shrines at the entrance of the village were referred to as the 'spirit gate'.<sup>61</sup>

According to Colson, shrines consisted of two general types, both of which are called *malende*. One type consisted of natural objects, to which sacred significance is attributed. For example, large hollow fig trees were often regarded as sacred and dwelling places for the ancestral spirits responsible for rain.<sup>62</sup> Another type of shrines consisted of artificial, man-made structures. These comprised small structures called *kaanda* (*twaanda* in plural), meaning "little huts".<sup>63</sup>

### 2.6.3. Leadership of Tonga Religious Practices

Both male and female elderly persons of the community take leading roles in Tonga religious practices. However, participation is the responsibility of every member of the matrilineal clan. The common element of the persons that facilitated the rituals was that they are possessed and motivated by the traditional spirits known as *basangu*,<sup>64</sup> who may possess anyone they chose. A person so possessed would then be recognised by the clan as a religious leader.

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<sup>58</sup> E. W Smith, *Knowing the African*, Lutterworth Press, London, 1946: 106

<sup>59</sup> E. Colson, *The Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1962: 217

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*: 217

<sup>61</sup> E Colson, *The Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia*, in Colson and Gluckman, *The Seven Tribes of British Central Africa*, Manchester University Press, Manchester 1951: 128

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*: 155

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*: 153

<sup>64</sup> E. Colson, *The Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia*, 1962: 159

The main traditional religious leaders of Tonga traditional practices included rainmakers, witch doctors, and priests. These leaders had specialised duties. The rainmaker played a significant role during the period of drought. A witch doctor attended to cases of sorcery, when a member of the clan was bewitched. The role of shrine priests varied depending on the level of ritual practice. These ranged from household to clan libation and or veneration of ancestors.

According to Colson, rainmakers were subject to the possession of the spirits (*basangu*) that worked through the rainmakers, informing the people of their misdeeds, and demanding the institution of new rituals or the better conduct of the old.<sup>65</sup>

After the spirit had possessed the rainmaker, he or she would request the villagers to assemble for the inaugural shrine ritual. If it seemed effective in producing rain, it was institutionalised. The rainmaker usually worked with helpers. Some of the younger helpers who demonstrated keen interest and ability would eventually be apprenticed to become future rainmakers. Though the acquisition of the spirit (*basangu*) was private and subjective, rainmakers were affirmed publicly by the community.

The authority and power of the rainmaker would be made effective through the performance of various rituals. As a specialised type of traditional leadership, the role of a rainmaker is highly regarded among the Tonga, for as an agrarian people, who spend their lives growing crops and raising cattle, they depend on rainfall. Thus the rain ritual ceremony known as *Luinde / Lwiindi* was essential for the Tonga people. *Lwiindi* involves praying to the ancestors, and giving thanks for the good harvest of the previous farming period. Late chiefs and rainmakers are venerated during the same ceremony which takes two or three days to fulfil,<sup>66</sup> With beer drinking and dancing a major part of both libation and celebration.<sup>67</sup> In the event that the rains did not come, the shrines were visited again and the ritual process was repeated.

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<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.* 159

<sup>66</sup> Chief Chikanta, *Interview*, Chief's Palace, Chikanta, October, 1999.

<sup>67</sup> E. Colson, *The Plateau Tonga*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1962: 87, 96



## **2.7. Foreign Intervention and the Tonga People**

Tonga society experienced foreign intervention at various stages of its history, both by other African ethnic groups and by Europeans.

### **2.7.1. The Kololo and Ndebele Invasion**

The Kololo and Ndebele raids that were recorded by David Livingstone are the earliest references to the Tonga in the southern province. David Livingstone refers to them as the Toka (as he calls the Tonga and Toka) in relation to the Kololo raids. The Kololo and Ndebele frequently raided the Tonga people for cattle. Livingstone further recounts his meeting with chief Monze at Monze's village. He suggests that chief Monze was the leader of all the Tonga people in the Batoka area.

However, the Tonga did not have a paramount chief. Usually they lived in small villages. They were a fragmented people group due to frequent raids from the surrounding people groups. In this regard, Selous' account seems to portray the prevalent view of Tonga socio-cultural structures.<sup>68</sup> Selous had passed through the Tonga territory and met some Tonga chiefs about thirty-five years after Livingstone's expedition through southern Zambia.

The Kololo and Ndebele raids were possible because the Tonga were known to have been more agrarian, rather than militant. The Ndebele and the Kololo attacked the Tonga for cattle and domestic slaves. There is no evidence of Arab slave routes in the region. However, there are accounts of African slave raids by the Kololo, Lozi and the Ndebele. For example, Colson records that:

During the nineteenth century, the Tonga people were badly smashed by the raids of the Kololo, Lozi, and Ndebele armies.<sup>69</sup> Such raids were usually for slaves and cattle and pleasure of raiding, and not to gain land or to establish political domination. Under the pressure of the raids, the Tonga did not attempt to unite in a common defence of their country. By 1890, they were a broken and beaten people, their cattle stolen, many of their people enslaved in Barotseland or among the Ndebele.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> F. Selous, *Travels and Adventures in South-East Africa*, 1893: 203-43

<sup>69</sup> A. Wood, *Northern Rhodesia: The Human Factor*, Pall Mall Press, London, 1961:80

<sup>70</sup> E. Colson, "The Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia", in Colson E, and Gluckman, M, eds. *Seven Tribes of the British Central Africa*, University Press, Manchester, 1951: 100

From such an account, it could be observed that there were no unified large groups of people among the Tonga at that time. This explains why the Tonga communities did not have paramount chiefs as did other tribes. Most Tonga lived in small units of villages, and traditional leadership structures were adapted to small village communities. The Tonga people were not organised around strong warrior-type leaders. They were led within their kinship and clans on a smaller scale.

The Tonga continued in such weakened circumstances in comparison with neighbouring peoples until the British conquered the militant Ndebele. This ended the history of Ndebele raids against the Tonga as Colson recounts:

The raids ended only with the conquest of the Ndebele by the British. Shortly after, the Tonga were subjected to European rule under the auspices of the British South African Company<sup>71</sup>

The end of the raids was followed by the British rule, through the British South African Company (BSAC) and the colonial administration.

### **2.7.2. The British Intervention**

The coming of the British in the then Northern Rhodesia in 1903 introduced a new form of domination over the Tonga people. While it differed in obvious ways from that which had been exerted by the raiding tribes, in that the British protected the Tonga from further invasion, it now imposed a system of taxation upon the Tonga, the like of which they had never previously experienced. While their cattle were protected from confiscation, the Tonga were subject to fiscal exploitation. To the degree that the Tonga acquiesced in these changes of domination, it was a matter of the lesser of the two evils.<sup>72</sup>

With the imposition of British rule came the introduction of Western forms of leadership. The BSAC established a civil administration which, as has already been noted, implemented the policy of indirect rule, exercising its authority through the already-existing institutions of leadership, with such amendments as the BSAC considered necessary for efficient administration. While the coming of the BSAC brought about political stability among the Tonga people, ridding them of the threat

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<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*:101

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*:

of the Ndebele, Kololo or Lozi raiders, it was at the cost of Tonga independence, and required far-reaching changes in traditional patterns of social and agrarian life.

In relation to the central concern of this thesis, the Tonga acceptance of British rule had far-reaching implications for traditional leadership, especially the selection process by which new chiefs were appointed. Indirect rule required that in future the Tonga people were no longer permitted to choose their own leaders without the ratification of the British colonial authority. They were forced to select headmen only in consultation with the BSAC. In addition, the Tonga had to submit to British regulations that required a minimum of ten male taxpayers before a village could be recognised as an administrative entity entitled to elect a chief.

This in turn placed extra strain on the subsistence food production. Every man identified as a taxpayer was required to pay his dues from the agricultural produce. The traditional systems of agriculture were forced to change from subsistence to commercial production in order to meet the increased economic demands of taxation. Failure to comply resulted in a community being denied its village status. The Tonga therefore began to produce cash crops, and Tonga men increasingly were attracted into migrant labour in the new industries, especially copper mining, that were opened by the British in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa.<sup>73</sup>

In these ways British intervention can be seen to have had a disruptive effect on the traditional conditions of the Tonga people.<sup>74</sup> Tonga society, like many other African people groups, depended on agriculture for their livelihood. Land was important to them. For example, traditions and techniques related to landholdings were affected by the coming of the BSAC. The European economic agenda included new forms of ownership of land that had the effect of displacing the indigenous people. Another major factor of social disturbance was the railway line that was built from Southern Rhodesia across the Zambezi into Northern Rhodesia after 1904.<sup>75</sup> The land on which railway line was constructed was appropriated by the colonial authority, leaving

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*:

<sup>74</sup> Further comprehensive analysis will be undertaken in subsequent chapters dealing with specific themes, such as mission and colonial interaction.

<sup>75</sup> L. Gann, *A History of Northern Rhodesia: Early days to 1953*, Chatto and Windus, 1964: 129

traditional Tonga residents homeless, landless, and deprived of their means of economic subsistence. Many were forced to move to other alternative portions of land.

The well-established railway system in turn attracted settler European farmers who were given preference in the purchase of farmland near the rail line for easy transportation of their produce. With the incursion of foreign-owned farms came a need for farm labour. Tonga men and women became hired labourers on the settlers' farms. They no longer farmed for their families and clan, but for meagre pay on foreigners' farms. Part of their earning was used to pay the taxes demanded by the BSAC.

These are but some of the more obvious examples of ways in which Tonga social structure was also affected by the European economic demands. Taxation and farm labour affected the loyalty of the Tonga to their traditional leaders. Economically they were bound to obey their foreign masters, but traditionally they were expected to honour the traditional headmen and chiefs. Furthermore, the authority of the chief was always monitored and sometimes undermined by the presence of the foreign rulers.

### **2.7.3. The Missionary Advent**

With the extension of British authority into Northern Rhodesia, Christian missionaries entered into the Tonga territory. At approximately the same time BSAC asserted control over Northern Rhodesia, a number of Christian missions had established mission stations in the Batoka region. Some of the mission organisations had moved into Zambia as early as 1885, when Coillard was permitted to establish a mission station among the Lozi. This was before the coming of the BSAC.<sup>76</sup> The second wave of missionary occupation began in the early 1900s.<sup>77</sup> Roman Catholics and the Seventh Day Adventists arrived around 1905. Other missions represented the Anglicans, Pilgrim Holiness, Brethren in Christ, Salvation Army, and the Methodists.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> P. Snelson, *Educational Development in Northern Rhodesia 1883-1945*, Kenneth Kaunda Foundation, Lusaka, 1974: 14-15

<sup>77</sup> L. Gann, *A History of Northern Rhodesia: early days to 1953*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1964:

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*: 111

The presence of various mission organisations brought about change in the religious allegiance of the Tonga people, as many moved from their traditional religious practices to adopt Christianity. The focal point of religious observance was to change from the rain shrines to the church structures, and this in turn was to introduce a new form of religious leadership. The rainmaker continued to be an influential figure,<sup>79</sup> but his traditional authority was now challenged by a new form of religious leadership embodied in the church priest or lay leader who emerged with the new Christian religion.

Land was also significant to the African traditional religions. Traditional religious shrines were closely associated with the land that they protected. When such land was appropriated by the British authorities for economic and infrastructural development, it was not easy for the Tonga simply to move their shrines. Displacement therefore has direct consequence on Tonga indigenous worship.

## **2.8. Summary and Conclusion**

Pre-colonial and pre-Christian Tonga society has been portrayed in historical and ethnographic literature as possessing a coherent social structure and orderly leadership systems. This chapter has discussed some main elements of Tonga socio-cultural traditions, selectively in relation to the issue of leadership as the central theme with which the thesis is concerned. Attention has been given to patterns and style of leadership in traditional Tonga community, and the rituals and religious specialisations that undergirded them.

The traditional leadership organisation of the Tonga people could be likened to a triangle. The apex of the triangle is represented by a superior chief, under whom was a group of senior headmen who, in turn, were in charge of other headmen. The headmen were leaders of villages. In addition, the Tonga people were led by traditional religious leaders who performed occasional rituals associated with praying for rain or venerating ancestors. Our discussion has demonstrated that these forms of leadership were well suited to local needs, and were exercised in a consultative

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<sup>79</sup> E. Colson, "The Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia", in Colson E, and Gluckman, M, eds. *Seven Tribes of the British Central Africa*, University Press, Manchester, 1951: 158

manner that included the participation of both men and women, and was expressed through consensus that preserved the unity and continuity of the community.

The structure and orderly leadership system would not necessarily imply a perfect social community. Later interaction with Europeans led to reformation, deformation and transformation of the early Plateau Tonga society. The advent of Christian missionary work was an important part of the changes that were introduced from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, adding religious re-orientation to the cultural, social, and economic transformations that were engineered by the colonial authority.

While it is clear that the Tonga largely acquiesced in these far-reaching changes, the question that arises from this chapter, and will be considered in those that follow, is the degree to which the patterns of leadership that were introduced by the BIC mission acknowledged the qualities of traditional Tonga leadership, and sought either to adapt or replace them in the process of Christianization.



## CHAPTER 3

### Entry Stage: The Founding Missionary Leaders and African Assistants 1906-1925



*Plate # 1. Frances Davidson and Adda Engle: Missionary Founders of Macha Mission in Zambia.<sup>1</sup>*

#### **3.1. Introduction**

The advent of the Brethren in Christ missionaries from North America into Africa was a cross-cultural and religious encounter. There were two possible effects of this encounter. One effect was that the American missionaries either imposed their cultural values on the Africans. Another effect might be that they sought to integrate

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<sup>1</sup> The African assistants do not appear in the picture, and their photographs are not readily available in the archives.



the African values with their own. These possible effects had implications for the handing over of leadership to the indigenous Christians.

The purpose of this chapter is therefore to describe the effects of the Brethren in Christ's early missionary efforts. This chapter has four main sections.

The first section consists of a brief background narrative of the Anabaptist roots of the Brethren in Christ. Both the theological and structural organisation of the Brethren in Christ can be traced back to the Anabaptist tradition. The use or neglect of Anabaptist values had missiological implications on the emergence and formation of leadership on the foreign mission field.

The second section comprises a brief description of the founding years of the denomination and its distinctive organisational and theological nature. The church's organisational structure influenced the type of leadership style and structure implemented on the mission field. Both the Anabaptist heritage and the church's organisational structure affected the philosophy and strategy of their foreign missions in Africa.

The third section portrays the beginning of the church's overseas mission. It also presents the role of women in the Brethren<sup>2</sup> and the perception of Africa and Africans as a motivating factor for Brethren missions.

The fourth section describes the mission efforts with particular reference to mission leadership. The significance of Frances Davidson, one of the first five Brethren missionaries and founder of Macha Mission in Zambia is also highlighted.

Underlying the structural and organisational factors was the western view and attitude towards African culture and lifestyle. The western perception of Africa and the African people was a major factor in the motivation, mobilisation, and promotion of mission abroad. The Brethren missionaries came from an Anabaptist and pietistic background. Their religious and cultural milieu formed the basis for their perception of Africans and this in turn must have affected the indigenisation pace of church leadership.

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<sup>2</sup> The name Brethren will be used in this thesis to denote Brethren in Christ.

### 3.2. Brethren Anabaptist Roots

The Brethren in Christ denomination stands in the Anabaptist tradition. Shenk defines Anabaptism as “a historical phenomenon, that part of the Reformation sometimes known as the Radical or Left Wing reformation because of its opposition to the established views, values, and institutions of both Roman Catholic and Protestant.”<sup>3</sup> This heritage is reflected in their historical and theological development. Some historical sources show that one of the earliest founding fathers of the denomination, Jacob Engle, was of Anabaptist/Mennonite stock. In the early days, the Brethren in Christ were sometimes called 'River Mennonites' or 'River Brethren.' The name is derived from the location of the first churches (Susquehanna River) and their adherence to Mennonite traditions.<sup>4</sup>

The influence of Anabaptist thought is further revealed in the official doctrinal statements of the Brethren in Christ Church. These documents, including their earliest confession of faith drawn up around 1780, demonstrate a continuous link to the Anabaptist tenets of faith such as, adult baptism, non-violence, and separation from the world.<sup>5</sup> Some of the present day church groups that share a direct historical Anabaptist heritage include Mennonites, Hutterites, the Amish, and the Church of the Brethren.<sup>6</sup>

The Brethren in Christ church traces its origin to the Anabaptist movement through the Mennonite church. In Zambia, Brethren in Christ have worked in partnership with the Mennonites through the Mennonite Central Committee.<sup>7</sup> Current joint fellowships of Brethren in Christ and the Mennonite conference demonstrate that the two denominations share the Anabaptist historical tradition.

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<sup>3</sup> W. R. Shenk, *By Faith They Went Out; Mennonite Missions 1850-1999*, Institute of Mennonite Studies, Occasional Paper No. 20, Elkhart, 2000:111. See also H. S. Bender, *The Anabaptist Vision*, Herald Press, Scottsdale, 1944: 18.

<sup>4</sup> The founders of the Brethren in Christ first settled along the Susquehanna River near the present town of Bainbridge in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. See C. O Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, 1978: 1.

<sup>5</sup> C. O Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience: The story of the Brethren in Christ*, Evangel Press, Nappanee, 1978:18. This is the most comprehensive account of the origin and early years of the Brethren in Christ. Future references will read, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*.

<sup>6</sup> C. A Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology*, Pandora Press, Ketchener, ON, 1977: 187.

<sup>7</sup> Formal, organised relationship between the Brethren in Christ (BIC) and the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) came in the context of World War Two. In 1940, BIC designated MCC as the means through which they would channel aid to areas affected by war. In the same year, they became formal members of the MCC with a seat on its governing body and with officers in its positions.

### 3.3. Anabaptist Tradition

The Anabaptist movement was an offshoot from the 16<sup>th</sup> century Protestant Reformation with Martin Luther in Wittenberg, Zwingli in Zurich, John Calvin in Geneva, and Martin Bucer in Strasbourg. The Anabaptists have also been referred to as the Radical Reformers.<sup>8</sup> Although they shared in the basic cause of the 16th century Protestant reformation, the Anabaptists perceived the efforts of Zwingli as inadequate. The Anabaptists were later also called Pietists. They featured a desire to carry the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century to its own logical conclusion. That conclusion was later characterised by an emphasis on brotherhood and the community of believers who became an alternative society both to the dominant church and to the secular government.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, they formulated the Schleitheim confession, which was a brief responsive document to the Protestant doctrinal standards.<sup>10</sup>

The designation Anabaptist was given to them by their opponents both as an accusation and sentence regarding what these opponents regarded as the doctrinal heresy of re-baptising, punishable by death. Thus, some of the early Anabaptist leaders died as martyrs. Historically, the heretical offence of re-baptising goes back to the crimes of the Donatists of the 4<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>11</sup>

#### 3.3.1. Historical Expansion of the Anabaptist

##### 3.3.1.1 The Swiss Anabaptists

The Anabaptist tradition finds its birth in Zwingli's Swiss reformation in Zurich. The Anabaptists in Zurich were also known as the Swiss Brethren. A team of highly educated parish priests, Conrad Grebel (1498-1526), Felix Manz (1498-1527), and George Cajakob (1490-1529) spearheaded the initial impetus for a radical change of theological direction. Following a series of religious revivals and renewals, the three men met with Michael Sattler to formulate the seven basic articles of the faith that stemmed from the tide of deviation of the Zwingli's Protestant reformation.<sup>12</sup> These seven articles of faith, later to be known as the Schleitheim confession, formed the

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<sup>8</sup> B. L. Callen, *Radical Christianity*, Evangel Publishing House, Nappanee, 1999: 57.

<sup>9</sup> D. Brown, *Understanding Pietism*, Evangel Publishing House, Nappanee, 1996: 17.

<sup>10</sup> B. L. Callen, *Radical Christianity*, 1999: 60. The Schleitheim confession is explained below when discussing Swiss Anabaptists.

<sup>11</sup> H. Jurgen-Goertz, *The Anabaptists*, Routledge, London, 1996: 119.

<sup>12</sup> J. Horsch, *Mennonites in Europe*, Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, PA, 1950:72.

core doctrinal beliefs of the Radical Reformers. These beliefs included baptism, the ban (church discipline), the Lord's Supper, separation from the world, church leadership, the sword and the Oath.

The main distinguishing doctrines between Zwingli and the early Anabaptist were baptism and the Lord's Supper. While in the Zwinglian reformation children were baptised, the Anabaptist demanded that baptism be restricted to converted adults. By such an affirmation, they excluded children who could not make any form of profession of faith on their own, thus going contrary to the state church's stand. The first "rebaptism" took place at Felix Manz's home in Zurich in 1525, which was regarded as the only true baptism. These baptisms carried the political consequence of heresy to the state church in Zurich and ushered in the bloody wave of persecutions.<sup>13</sup>

The spread and growth of Anabaptism in the early years are believed to have been the result of persecution, conversion, and search for free land. Under such social and political persecution, Anabaptists spread to Germany, Russia, and Holland.

### 3.3.1.2. *The Dutch Anabaptists*

The emergence of Anabaptist influence in Holland was the result of Christian mission endeavours and migration from Northern Germany.<sup>14</sup> One of the key leaders in Holland to be influenced by Anabaptist tradition was Menno Simons, from whom the Mennonites derived their name. He was ordained as a Catholic priest in 1524. Simons first encountered Anabaptist teachings in 1531. He continued the study of the New Testament and the writings of the Church Fathers. This eventually led him to embrace one of the major tenets of the Anabaptists, namely adult baptism. He left the Catholic Church and became the key leader of the Anabaptist movement in Holland and Northern Germany. His numerous writings remain the most read and influential Anabaptist literature.<sup>15</sup>

In later centuries, Anabaptist expansion was prompted by religious oppression. Due to much persecution in Holland and Germany, the Anabaptist movement expanded

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<sup>13</sup> B. L. Callen, *Radical Christianity*, 1999: 58.

<sup>14</sup> C. A. Synder, *Anabaptist History and Theology*, 1997: 60

<sup>15</sup> H. Jurgen-Goertz, *The Anabaptists*, 1996: 33, 182

rapidly into Russia. Under the adverse impact of the Bolshevik revolution of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, some Mennonites migrated to the United States of America and Canada. Apart from North America, Anabaptist immigrants also arrived in to South America.

The immigration into the Americas brought about the birth of the Brethren in Christ denomination through the influence of the Mennonite church. The first Mennonite church was established in Germantown, Pennsylvania. The Anabaptist movement continued to expand in North America under the major groups such as the Mennonites, the Brethren, and the Hutterites. The core values of these groups included the community life of faith, known as the brotherhood. Thus, the term “Brethren” came to represent the close fellowship of brothers and sisters who met in these groups. Communal life involved the sharing of life and goods.

One of the underlying features of the emigration of Mennonites from Europe to the Americas was the group's strong Anabaptist doctrinal convictions and theological persuasion.

### **3.3.2. Theological Development of the Anabaptists**

Historically, Anabaptists shared the important fundamental beliefs of the Protestant reformers. However, the term radical reformation explains their deviation from Protestant reformed theology. This earned them the name Anabaptists.<sup>16</sup>

Two major doctrinal documents emerged as the main sources of belief for the Anabaptists. In 1527, a quartet of Anabaptist leaders met to draft the first opposing views to Zwinglian reformed thought and teaching. The document, called the Schleitheim confession, was published. The immediate implication of such a theological declaration was complete separation of political and ecclesiastical association from state church.

Another hundred years later, in 1632, 52 Mennonite church leaders met at Dortrecht, Holland, to sign a common confession. This confession was to become the major doctrinal document for the Mennonite church worldwide. The influence of the Dortrecht confession resulted in two significant translations. In 1660, in Ohnenheim, Germany, a group of elders and ministers adopted a German version of the

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<sup>16</sup> See description on Anabaptism on section 1.1. Anabaptist Tradition



confession. In 1725, the Dortrecht confession was further translated into English, this time, to meet the needs of the Mennonites in North America.<sup>17</sup>

The confession was comprehensive, and comprised 18 articles divided into two sections of doctrine and ordinances. The principal topics included were baptism, mutual support (community), peace, and non-violence. The church under the Anabaptist tradition remains a voluntary community of faith.

The historical and theological development of the Anabaptist tradition carried missiological implications. The rapid spread of the Anabaptist movement was characterised by persecution, conversion, and the search for pockets of cultivatable land. One of the results of the Trans-Atlantic migration was the founding of the Brethren in Christ denomination. To this day, the Brethren in Christ carry the Anabaptist identity in various forms.

### **3.4. Brethren in Christ Early History**

The founding fathers of the Brethren in Christ church trace their roots to the Anabaptist tradition. Early Brethren founders had been Mennonites. The Anabaptists fled persecution in Europe to embark on mission work in the New World of North America.<sup>18</sup> The religious persecution forced some Anabaptists to move to England and later they sailed to America around 1751. These voyages were hazardous and most of their goods were lost at sea.<sup>19</sup> As indicated earlier, the search for freedom and preservation of their beliefs led them to brave these challenging journeys. They first settled along the Susquehanna River near the present town of Bainbridge in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.<sup>20</sup>

Like most other religious movements, prominent and influential leaders emerged to give direction to the community of believers in their first settlement. It was largely a

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<sup>17</sup> H. J. Loewen, *One Lord, One Church, One Hope, and One God*, Institute of Mennonite Studies, Elkhart, IN, 1985: 25. See also M. R. Loewen, "The Dortrecht Confession: Mennonite Statements of Faith United Early Movements," *Mennonite Reporter*, April 19, 1982: 12.

See also S. F. Pannabecker, *Open Doors: A History of the General Conference Mennonite Church*, Faith and Life Press, Newton, KS, 1975.

<sup>18</sup> C. O. Wittlinger, Who Are the Brethren in Christ? in E. M. Sider (ed), *Reflections on a Heritage*, Evangel Publishing House, Nappanee, 1999: 21.

<sup>19</sup> Arthur Climenhaga, Brethren in Christ, *The Mennonite Encyclopaedia*, Mennonite Publishing House, Scottsdale, 1955, Vol. 1:424.

<sup>20</sup> C. O. Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, Evangel Press, Nappanee, 1978:1.

farming community. According to Wittlinger, among several leaders, Jacob Engel became a prominent founding father of the denomination. He was born in 1753. He married Veronica Shock. Engel was from a long line of Anabaptist believers. His father Uhlrich Engel was a Swiss Mennonite, who is believed to have arrived with his family in Philadelphia on the ship, *Phoenix* in 1754.<sup>21</sup> Jacob Engel's role as a founding father of the Brethren in Christ church is emphasised by some of the authoritative Brethren historians.<sup>22</sup> Another historian, Levi Lukenbach, a nineteenth century bishop, alludes to this fact:

Among the number of immigrants that landed in this country, were two children...destined in after years to be mainly instrumental in founding the church in this country.... Jacob Engel, the younger of those two, was apparently especially called of God for the work before him, namely, the building up of the cause of our blessed redeemer.<sup>23</sup>

The Engel brothers joined a Mennonite related group of worshippers that settled along the Susquehanna River, in Lancaster County. Both John and Jacob Engel have been described as having been pietistically converted Mennonites. They were committed to the teaching of pietistic conversion, which was a prerequisite of baptism and discipleship. This pietistic influence and understanding were further consolidated by the revival and evangelistic preaching of Martin Boelm, a Mennonite minister. Wittlinger suggests that Boelm's Mennonite heritage provided a point of contact with the Engel brothers who were equally of Anabaptist descent.

However, with the passing of time, the Engel group drifted away from Boelm because of his more liberal views on baptism. The congregation was made up of converts of Mennonite stock, who believed in triune immersion, but had little formal organisation. They gathered in smaller groups known as brotherhoods. Climenhaga states that the outlying brotherhoods looked to the one along the Susquehanna River as the centre of these communities. Consequently, the Susquehanna brotherhood became the headquarters for the emerging larger community, which was later known

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<sup>21</sup> C. O. Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, 1978:15.

<sup>22</sup> A. W. Climenhaga, *History of the Brethren in Christ Church*, Evangel Publishing House, Nappanee, 1942:345, C. O. Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, Evangel Press, Nappanee, 1978

<sup>23</sup> [L. Lukenbach], "Brethren in Christ", Origin, Confession of Faith, and Church Government...of the Brethren in Christ, 1871-1881:4-5 (This volume hereafter cited as Church Government 1881)



as the River Brethren. It later became the watershed for the expansion of the church in North America.<sup>24</sup>

The River Brethren as they were called, were therefore greatly influenced by Anabaptist tradition and pietistic beliefs. These two strands of religious influence formed the basis for the formation of the new religious society. Wittlinger described the decision process of the formation as follows:

The decision of the Brethren to launch their own religious society undoubtedly involved deep soul-searching. They eventually concluded that there was no other society within which they could combine their pietistic concept of the new birth with their understandings of the church and scriptural obedience.<sup>25</sup>

The high view of scripture would later be one of the main factors that influenced the naming of their church. From being known as the River Brethren, the group went to adopt the name: Brethren in Christ. The committee that recommended the adoption of this name pointed out that the Brethren in Christ name had clear scriptural authority, arguing that even the Apostle Paul addressed an epistle, "To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ...at Colossae."<sup>26</sup> The main factors that enabled the early Brethren to form a separate religious society revealed an established theological perspective and worldview.

### **3.4.1 Theological Development of the Brethren in Christ**

The Brethren history reveals two streams of theological influence. The first stream stems from the founding father, Jacob Engel, who was a Mennonite with Anabaptist roots. The second stream emerged when the Engel group got involved with the pietistic preaching of Boelm. One of the Brethren historians describes the interaction or synthesis of the two theological orientations:

...the Brethren originally synthesised two theological traditions. They sought to integrate the pietistic emphasis on personal piety, centering on the new birth experience, with the Anabaptist-rooted understanding of the church as a gathered community of believers. The Mennonites and the German Baptists mediated Anabaptist roots to the Brethren. Both the pietistic and the

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<sup>24</sup> A. W. Climenhaga, *History of the Brethren in Christ Church*, 1942:345

<sup>25</sup> C. Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, 1978:25

<sup>26</sup> C. Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, 1978:29. See also quoted Bible passage Colossians 1:2

Anabaptist traditions accentuated the importance of discipleship, the former relating it to personal ethics and the latter extending it to include the necessity of realising the New Testament church.<sup>27</sup>

This synthesised theological background would later form the foundation of their beliefs and ordinances. According to Wittlinger, four doctrines of belief seemed vital to the formulation of their worldview:

The authority of scripture for the faith and practice; a heartfelt conversion experience or new birth; the church as a visible community of converted adults; and a surrounding world hostile to the faith and life of that community.<sup>28</sup>

The Brethren did not base their theological thought on any historical creeds or confessions. They regarded the Holy Scriptures as the primary basis for their beliefs, using the New Testament as the main source of teaching.<sup>29</sup> The Scriptures were regarded as the primary frame of reference for the church. As early as 1879, one of the church leaders, reflecting on their history, wrote:

At this stage, those co-labourers met together in council, and in deep meditation and prayer, discarding all human creeds, and taking the unadulterated Word of God as a guide, and seeking to follow the primitive teachings of Christ and his disciples, and adopting the New Testament as their rule of faith and practice, founded the church in the United States of America.<sup>30</sup>

With the above affirmation, the Brethren sought to fashion their life and organisation after the New Testament pattern of the church. Other church related beliefs were formulated from the reading and interpretation of the Bible. Their view of scripture was certainly influenced by the Protestant and Anabaptist tradition. The Protestant reformers as well as the Anabaptists held to the view known in Latin as '*sola scriptura*', meaning by scripture alone.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> M. Schrag, The Original and Classical Brethren in Christ Concept of the Church, *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Vol. 46, April 1972:130. (Hereafter, this article will be referred to as "Concept of the Church")

<sup>28</sup> C. Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, 1978:35

<sup>29</sup> C. N. Hostettler, Brethren in Christ, *Mennonite Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 1, Mennonite Publishing House, 1955:424. These core theological values would later influence the missiological philosophy and practice of the Brethren in Christ missionaries. Their motivation and goal became the conversion of sinners.

<sup>30</sup> *Church Government 1881*, BIC Archives, Grantham, PA

<sup>31</sup> H. Jurgen-Goertz, *The Anabaptists*, 1996:49.

The pietistic emphasis on personal conversion was perceived as an entry point to the community of believers. This concept became one of the essential parts of the Brethren worldview.

They believed that theological orthodoxy, church sacraments and ceremonies, Christian upbringing, moral behaviour, and good intentions did not merit God's favour. Only as repentant sinners cast themselves upon the mercy of God who worked in them the miracle of regeneration or new birth could they join the ranks of the redeemed and share the fellowship of the church.<sup>32</sup>

This basic and crucial aspect of their worldview attributed salvation to be the sovereign work of God, hence great emphasis they placed on the conversion experience. The individual's salvation experience was perceived as the first step to the establishment of the fellowship of believers. This new community was referred to as the 'Brotherhood'.<sup>33</sup>

The Brethren considered the new birth of an individual believer as a part of the corporate community known as the church. Drawing from the Anabaptist view of the church as a gathered community of believers, the church became the means for caring for each other and for the propagation of their beliefs.<sup>34</sup> Schrag aptly summarises the Brethren's comprehensive sketch of the foundation and philosophy of the church:

...the church was and is the result of God's grace. It was called into being by God; it was made possible by the work of Jesus Christ. Christ is the head of His body and the Holy Spirit guides and indwells the new community. Being divinely constituted, the church is not "formed by men and managed according to their own ideas."<sup>35</sup>

The above stated description reveals the Brethren's high view of the source and administration of the church. God's salvation experience, which an individual experienced, had corporate implications. Some of these implications were referred to as ordinances. Ordinances were perceived as important demonstrations of obedience. According to the historian Wittlinger these ordinances were to be regarded as

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<sup>32</sup> C. Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, 1978: 38.

<sup>33</sup> M. Schrag, *Concept of the Church*, 1972:135.

<sup>34</sup> M. Schrag, *Concept of the Church*, 1972:130

<sup>35</sup> M. Schrag, *Concept of the Church*, 1972:131

symbolic practices prescribed for Christian believers. This was essential to the Brethren interpretation of the Bible.

One of the main ordinances was baptism. The converted followers were initiated into the community of believers by means of water baptism. The ordinance of baptism was a rite through which the individual convert entered into responsible membership of the brotherhood community. The Brethren practised a triune immersion form of baptism. They claimed that triune immersion reflected the New Testament model as portrayed in the last chapter of Matthew's Gospel: "baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."<sup>36</sup> They believed that baptism was essential as it reflected the burial of the old life and the resurrection of the new.

Membership of the new society of the brotherhood entailed the acceptance of the Brethren's interpretation of their faith and its relationship to secular culture. The Brethren believed that the truly converted would voluntarily separate themselves from the world. To the Brethren, conversion meant non-conformity to the world.<sup>37</sup> This practise resulted into the establishment of a religious sub-culture. The counter cultural practices resulted in the imposition of various social restrictions on their members. The restrictions included a modest dress code, non-use of jewellery, and no intake of alcohol.<sup>38</sup>

In some cases, the practice of social restriction became the basis for a stringent imposition of church discipline. This ordinance was earlier on referred to as the 'Ban' in the early Anabaptist beliefs.<sup>39</sup>

The Lord's Supper was another ordinance that the Brethren practised. This ceremony was characteristically referred to as "communion." The term communion signified the essence of the church as the gathering of believers in fellowship. This communion ritual was believed to be the commemoration of the death of Jesus Christ

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<sup>36</sup> C. Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, 1978:62

<sup>37</sup> F. Elliot, *Secret Societies, Visitor*, VI, May 1, 1893:131

<sup>38</sup> J. Engle, *Religious and Cultural Beliefs and Practices of the Brethren in Christ*, Proceedings of the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of Mennonite Educational and Cultural Problems, Grantham, PA, 1951:82 - 83. See also C. O. Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, 1978:48

<sup>39</sup> F. H. Littell, *The Anabaptist View of the Church*, Starr King Press, Boston, 1958:86. Such social restrictions later carried with them some missiological implications. The Brethren missionaries found themselves among Africans who had very little or no clothes to cover their nakedness, and used alcohol for social and traditional celebrations

for the sins of mankind. This understanding of Brethren communion is found in words used in passing the elements to one another.<sup>40</sup> They practised communion once a year, as a way of remembering the death of Jesus Christ. This practice also served as a reminder to each other of the need for keeping their personal and corporate lives cleansed of hindrances to fellowship.<sup>41</sup>

Closely related to the practice of communion, the Brethren obeyed what they regarded as the explicit command of washing one another's feet. Wittlinger cites a nineteenth century writer who summarised the Brethren's understanding of the ordinance of foot washing and its practical implications:

Feet-washing...is a lesson of love of the purest type. It also teaches humility, and that we should esteem others better than ourselves. It also fosters a spirit of equality and of oneness among the children of God. It upsets and dethrones all selfish and domineering tendencies. It embraces and binds together the inseparable bonds of love and true fellowship of all the children of God.<sup>42</sup>

The Brethren embraced the ordinance of feet washing as it enhanced their desire to shun pride and practise humility. They upheld the practise as a means of love and obedience to God. The Brethren washed and wiped each other's feet, as they understood this to be obeying the command of Jesus Christ.<sup>43</sup>

The Brethren practised baptism, the Lord's Supper, and feet washing as the basic ordinances of their church tradition. These basic ordinances are observed wherever the Brethren exist to this day. However, two other ordinances were perpetuated, namely, prayer veiling for women and the salutation of the holy kiss. The church's General Conference affirmed prayer veiling, which involved women keeping a covering over their heads.<sup>44</sup> Women observed this ordinance mainly in public worship. This implied that they were not under obligation to veil when they were outside church services.

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<sup>40</sup> *Church Government*, 1887:51

<sup>41</sup> C. Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, 1978: 64

<sup>42</sup> C. Baker, "Feet-washing," *Visitor*, VI, January 1, 1894:5.

<sup>43</sup> C. Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, 1978:68.

<sup>44</sup> *General Conference Index*, 1884: 281. The General Conference has been the highest decision making body of the Brethren in Christ Church.

The greeting of one another with a holy kiss was interpreted as a form of Christian salutation. This ordinance was practised by men with men and women with women. It was a demonstration of a more affectionate fraternal greeting of Christian love.

Both prayer veiling and the holy kiss are ordinances that are no longer demanded of the members of the denomination. Members today are at liberty to practise them or not. The practice and propagation of church teachings and ordinances impacted the philosophy and practice of both domestic and overseas missions.<sup>45</sup>

### **3.4.2. Church Organisation and Leadership Structure**

Historically, the Brethren began their work in house groups. They held their worship and teaching meetings in homes and barns. These gatherings were referred to as "house church." This concept of the church was a distinctive mark of their gathering for the first seventy-five years of their experience.

The meetings consisted of designated sitting arrangements. The gathered congregations were divided by gender. Wittlinger states that during the services, the congregation was divided into two face to face groups, with men on one side and women on the other. The minister took the centre stage of the meeting room. All learning and observance of ordinances were done in this congregational setting.

As the gatherings grew in number, house churches were replaced by meeting houses. These were plain frame or brick rectangular structures. Pew dividers separated the sitting of men and women. According to Wittlinger, the ministers officiated behind a table at floor level in the centre of the room.<sup>46</sup> The lack of raised platforms in the "Meeting Houses" could have signified equality between the preacher and the laity. However, with time this arrangement changed.<sup>47</sup>

The Brethren usually claimed to base most of their church practices on biblical principles.<sup>48</sup> However, this aspect of room arrangement is one of the traditions that

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<sup>45</sup> Missiological implications will be discussed as they are related to the church planting efforts on the African mission field. The Brethren were confronted with different contextual and cultural factors from their own.

<sup>46</sup> C. O. Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, 1978:78.

<sup>47</sup> J. A. Byers, *Church Leadership*, Academic Papers, BIC Archives, Messiah, Grantham Pa

<sup>48</sup> M. H. Schrag, *A Historical Survey of the Brethren in Christ Hermeneutics*, in E. M. Sider ed., *Reflections on a Heritage*, Evangel Publishing house, 1999:189.



lacked any specific biblical support. Wittlinger observes that the Brethren must have been more concerned with the group dynamics than what he referred to as "churchly" atmosphere. Although this practice had no biblical basis, yet it was one that the Brethren adhered to and propagated as they embarked on their foreign missions in Africa.<sup>49</sup>

Gradual expansion of the church led to grouping of the churches into districts. The districts were situated in various states. These were formed for conducting church business in district councils. The next level of decision-making on church business was the State Council, which handled cases that were not resolved at district level. The highest decision-making body was the General Conference. The General Conference convened once a year and handled cases, which were not satisfactorily resolved at the State Council's level.

Church leadership followed the same pattern as the organisational structure. An elder or part-time minister led the house groups. Before 1890, the Brethren did not pay their church officials for the administrative or ministerial duties. Free-will gifts and offerings were accepted as a form of honorarium. Sometimes travel expenses were reimbursed to travelling or itinerant preachers. Financial support for church officials was only introduced around 1908. At that time, Brethren churches in Ohio instituted and improved the financial care of their ministers.<sup>50</sup>

A church deacon assisted the ministers. The church deacon was a lay- person. His duties included pastoral care and the chairing of the church board. Another category of leadership was that of an evangelist who were normally itinerant preachers. They conducted evangelistic and revival meetings in various church districts.

Districts as outlined above comprised one or more local churches in a given state. A bishop who worked with several ministers led the district council meetings. The Brethren church practised a top down leadership structure headed by a bishop.

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<sup>49</sup> Older church structures in North America are similar to those erected in Zambia.

<sup>50</sup> C. O. Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety And Obedience*, 1978: 96 - 97

However, the General Conference was the highest decision-making body of the denomination.<sup>51</sup>

### **3.4.3. Theology of Leadership: Ordination and Position of Bishop**

The Brethren in Christ theology of leadership is reflected in its organisational structure, with the Bishop as the most senior church leader. According to Wittlinger, one of the BIC historians, the choice and ordination of ministers among the BIC was preceded by the reading of a Bible passage from 2 Timothy 3:1-13, which described the qualifications for leadership.<sup>52</sup>

#### *Theology of Leadership and Ordination*

Ordination was a requirement upon candidates who desired to be ministers or were to be elected to the senior Church leadership positions such as Overseer or Bishop. The candidate was expected to undergo examinations organised by the Church's ministerial and examining Board. The Board's duties included establishing standards for ministerial ordination and certifying when these standards had been met. A satisfactory completion of a prescribed study or its equivalent was a necessary requisite. Ordination was officiated by a Bishop or a team of Bishops. After the completion of the ordination examination with regard to doctrine and soundness of faith, the candidate stood before the congregation and the Bishop affirmed him by laying on of hands and invoking the blessing of God and the Holy Spirit upon him.<sup>53</sup>

The ordained minister was authorised to conduct the ordinances of the church which included Baptism, and Holy Communion. On-going doctrinal education was required of ordained ministers whose primary task was teaching and preaching.<sup>54</sup>

#### *Theology of Leadership and Position of Bishop*

The position of Bishop was open to all ordained BIC ministers. The Bishop was nominated by the church executive Board and elected by the General Conference. His duties were precisely described as:

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<sup>51</sup> This tradition structure would later be transferred to their overseas mission fields such as Africa. See illustrated diagrams and discussion in chapter six (6). For example the foreign structure included the position of deacons, though only Africans were elected to the position in Zambia. See page 127.

<sup>52</sup> C. O. Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, 1978: 86

<sup>53</sup> C. O. Wittlinger, 1978: 435

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

He shall serve as administrative head of the church and its related ministries, with particular attention to the spiritual life of the congregations and the spiritual aspects of the church's service ministries.<sup>55</sup>

The bishop was responsible to the executive Board and the General conference. His primary task was to coordinate implementation of the decision made by the General Conference. The qualifications for the position of Bishop included, ordination, loyalty to Church doctrine, good counselling qualities and ability to provide hospitality. The Bishop was expected to supervise and give leadership to other senior Church leaders.<sup>56</sup>

### **3.4.4. Church Expansion in North America**

#### **3.4.3.1. Home Missions**

The growth of the Brethren church was believed to have been largely by means of migration. These agrarian settlers on the frontier created bases from which the itinerant evangelists conducted visitations and preaching ministry in the surrounding communities.<sup>57</sup> This mission effort was sometimes known as mission to the frontiers. Christian mission was centred on the westward-moving frontier. For the Brethren, an agrarian community was an opportunity of finding new farmland. Most evangelists and church planters were farmers. They sacrificed their livelihood by volunteering to engage in missionary journeys. Davidson recorded these early mission efforts:

These journeys were made without remuneration and often with great discomfort and sacrifice of time and money. The precept that the gospel was free, "without money and without price," seemed so instilled into their hearts that some of them, no doubt, would have felt pained for people to think that they expected money for their services. So while the laity were busy with their own temporal duties, these heralds of the cross would often leave their little farms in care of their wives and of help, hired at their own expense and devote weeks and months to the evangelistic work, expecting what? Nothing but their food and sometimes ---- were sufficient to pay their fare, if they went by train. But it often happened in those early days that the entire expense of whatever sort was borne by themselves.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> See Appendix 5a; *Appendices to Zambia Executive Board Minutes*, 29<sup>th</sup> November, 1973: 4

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, 1978:5

<sup>57</sup> T. A. Long, "The Mission Spirit," *Visitor*, XXV, July 24, 1911:1

<sup>58</sup> H. F. Davidson, *South and South Central Africa*, 1915:19-20.

Voluntary missionary journeys were the means for the establishment of rural missions. Later the denomination began considering setting up a corporate mission programme. Despite the resolutions of several General Conferences, the denomination was not of one mind. According to Wittlinger, the programme could not be implemented because the Brethren were not familiar with general church projects that required continued financial support.<sup>59</sup> Regional tent meetings, which proved successful, replaced suggested church-wide funded missions, starting in Kansas and thereafter in other parts of the United States and Canada.<sup>60</sup>

Another aspect of the Brethren early missionary effort was the founding of City Missions. The co-founder was a woman by the name of Sarah Bert. This mission programme included preaching, home visitation, and Sunday school. In an era of male dominance, it was remarkable for a woman to actively pursue mission work. The first city mission was started 1894, in Chicago. Its strategic location in the Midwestern United States and the lack of a Brethren church contributed to the choice. According to Wittlinger, Bert served for fifty years in the Chicago City mission becoming the longest serving missionary.<sup>61</sup>

The role of female workers in the Brethren mission programme was significant. Early Brethren writers referred to female participation in mission as "sister help." In one of the reports Zook and Book, travelling missionaries, acknowledged that there was no effectual work that could be done in such mission fields without "sister help," for the Lord did use the "sisters" to reach the hearts of both men and women. This significant trend of encouraging women's involvement in mission continued when the Brethren ventured into foreign missions outside the United States.<sup>62</sup> It is evident from the above acknowledgement by travelling missionaries that the work of women in mission was not confined to helping women only, it included men as well.

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<sup>59</sup> C. O Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, 1978: 164.

<sup>60</sup> J. H. Engle, "Notes from Kansas," *Visitor*, 1, September, I, 1888:201. Quoted in C. O Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, 1978:172.

<sup>61</sup> C. O. Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, 1978: 176.

<sup>62</sup> H. F. Davidson, *Diary*, January 29, 1897. The diary is deposited in the Brethren in Christ Archives. Davidson became the first candidate of the Brethren foreign mission. See also Rhoda E. Lee, "An Appeal for Foreign Missions," *Visitor*, VIII, November 15, 1895: 193. This appeal led to the formation of Brethren foreign mission work.

The Brethren in Christ were soon impressed with the need for foreign missions. The denomination launched its missionary vision through conference speeches and articles in the church's periodical.

### **3.5. Brethren in Christ Overseas Missions**

The official launching of the Brethren in Christ foreign mission activities is recorded as having taken place in 1894. As early as 1890, the Brethren church had begun formal discussions regarding the founding of foreign mission. A report of the Brethren in Christ General Conference in the same year read: "It was indeed a pleasure to observe the growing interest of the church in mission work. The great difficulty seemed to have been to select judiciously, the fields of labour and to find willing and qualified labourers."<sup>63</sup>

The Brethren efforts for overseas missions began in an era of American Protestant mission expansion. The late 1800s and early 1900s saw the rise of various Protestant mission efforts in America. Among the significant organisations was the rise of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions (SVM), Student Christian Movements (SCM), and the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF). The names of John R. Mott and Robert Speer would emerge as key mission theorists and leaders of the time. The Student Volunteer Movement has been noted as one of the most influential efforts for foreign missions in the late 1800s, with its famous Watchword, 'The evangelisation of the world in this generation'.<sup>64</sup> It was in this era of Protestant mission expansion that Brethren efforts to engage in overseas mission began.

Discussions regarding the founding of foreign missions were followed by several appeals published in the Church's periodical.<sup>65</sup> The momentum for the appeal for overseas missions was made possible by the Church's public teaching and preaching, conference speeches and articles submitted to the Church's periodical, the '*Evangelical Visitor*'. Several authors wrote to inform and challenge the denomination's readers. Women played a significant role in making appeals for foreign mission.

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<sup>63</sup> Report of General Conference, "*Visitor*", III, June 1, 1890: 161.

<sup>64</sup> A. F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, T and T Clark, Edinburgh, 1996:30, 38, 224.

<sup>65</sup> *Evangelical Visitor*, the church's periodical carried articles of appeal for foreign missions.

### 3.5.1. Appeal for Overseas Missions

The significant role of women in the Brethren missions had implications for leadership. Women were keen contributors to the founding of the foreign missionary movement in the Brethren church. Among the most notable were Rhoda Lee<sup>66</sup> and Frances Davidson.<sup>67</sup> The influences of Lee and Davidson were noticeable in their literary contributions published in the denomination's periodical, '*Evangelical Visitor*'. Subsequently, the overseas mission activities were launched with the sending of the first five missionaries to Africa in 1897. Four of the five missionaries were women.

Despite the fact that the first missionaries went to Africa in 1897, it was in 1894 that the first foreign mission action of the church was taken. This took place after the reading of a paper by Rhoda Lee entitled, "An Appeal for Foreign Missions." This appeal was small, but had significant influence for it led the General Conference to resolve on the launching of foreign mission activities for the denomination. The paper was read at the Brethren in Christ Conference held at the Bethel church in Dickinson County, Kansas, in May 1894. Coupled with the appeal was the immediate response by Jacob Stauffer who donated a five-dollar bill to the mission fund.<sup>68</sup> This was the first financial contribution to the cause of foreign mission in the Brethren in Christ church.

Stauffer's financial contribution was a direct response to Lee's plea:

Oh may I dare to hope that a missionary fund may be started and a systematic method of foreign work be organised, and that each of us will practice economy and self-denial to swell the fund. 'The King's business requires haste,' and may God speed the time when I 'hear a rumour from the Lord that an ambassador is sent among the heathen.'<sup>69</sup>

It is interesting to note that the work of foreign mission was inaugurated with gathering of financial contribution before the availability of missionaries had been

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<sup>66</sup> C. O. Wittlinger, Rhoda E. Lee, Missionary Enthusiast, *Notes and Queries in Brethren in Christ History*, Vol. II, Number 3, July, 1961:11. See also R. Lee, An Appeal for Foreign Missions, *Visitor*, June, 1, 1894:162.

<sup>67</sup> E. M Sider, *Nine Portraits: Brethren in Christ Biographical Sketches*, Evangel Press, 1978:159. See also H. F. Davidson, *South, and South Central Africa*, 1915:7.

<sup>68</sup> C. O. Wittlinger, Rhoda E. Lee, Missionary Enthusiast, *Notes and Queries in Brethren in Christ History*, Vol. III, Number 3, July 1961:12.

<sup>69</sup> R. Lee, An Appeal for Foreign Missions, *Visitor*, June, 1, 1894:162.



ascertained. Later the historical records would show that the appointment of missionaries was delayed by the non-availability of volunteers to go to the mission field. Finances then and now remain a significant motivating factor for overseas missions.

The context in which Lee, a female speaker, presented the paper demands further reflection. It was unusual for women of her time to stand and speak in public church meetings. The status of women in the church at the time did not allow for formal execution of religious duties.<sup>70</sup> Lee gained access to speak to the conference audience by supposedly presenting a paper. A poem submitted to the *Visitor* reveals the role and position of women at the time. It reads in part:

Sisters too, can work for Jesus  
Take a part, though e'er so small;  
You can tell how much He loved us,  
You can say He died for all.<sup>71</sup>

The above quoted poem reveals the continued appeal for women's participation in the work of the church in the midst of restricted service. The poem was a plea for women's contribution to the work of the church in general at the time. Rhoda Lee's persuasive paper read at the 1894 conference reflects its statistical approach and impassioned earnestness:

I wish, by the help of God, to place before our minds, today, a few facts concerning our obligation as stewards of God to obey our master's command to preach the gospel to every creature.

I find that in China, the last fifty years, 30,000 converts have been born into the kingdom of God, but along side of that, 15,000,000 have been added to Heathenism by birth. In spite of the triumphs of the gospel, the heathen conquests have outstripped the Christian seventy-to-one.

Africa contains one-fourth of the world's area; it has 200,000,000 of the people and 600 languages, the Bible not translated into 75 of them. The Sudan alone is 4000 miles long by 1000 wide; it has 99,000,000 people and 100 languages. The most neglected part of the earth! Oh are there not some of us here today who will exclaim in the language of the great apostle, 'Yea have

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<sup>70</sup> During this era, only men had the privilege to formal church ordination. This restricted women from executing official church duties such as preaching and teaching.

<sup>71</sup> S. McTaggart, A Prayer for the Church, *Visitor*, Vol., I, Number 4, December 1, 1887:49.

I [striven] to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation.<sup>72</sup>

Not much is known about the sources of the presented statistics above. It is evident that there was some exaggeration. However, it seemed that the author was attempting to persuade the audience to respond to the needs of the unconverted world. The statistics were a tool for comparative analysis and persuasion. Their effect was seen by the immediate response of the donation of funds and the appointment of a financial secretary for foreign mission. The appeals for mission were not only focussed on statistical data, but also included biblical references.

Lee's involvement in mission work was not only limited to her persuasive appeals for missionary personnel and support, she later went on to engage in home missions. Wittlinger narrates her participation in missions in Kansas.

Rhoda Lee was a married woman, for we find that in December 1895, she was about to move with her family to Scranton, Kansas, to do mission work among the miners. Her husband was already there.<sup>73</sup>

Lee's missionary efforts were part of the American mission to the frontier. The frontier missionaries targeted pioneers of the westward move for new opportunities of economic and social prosperity.<sup>74</sup>

While utilising the statistical data analysis for persuasion, other writers employed Bible references to plead for missionary personnel. Noah Zook, a noted Brethren itinerant evangelist illustrates this type of effort in his article entitled 'Mission'.

The object of this article is to stir up, if possible the pure minds of all my co-labourers in the gospel with regard to this very important matter, --important because a dispensation of the gospel is committed to each one of the ambassadors of Jesus.... Here is the emphatic command, "Go ye." And Paul says how shall they preach except they be sent?" And in the days of the apostles the Holy Ghost said, "Separate for me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called." Acts 13:2. Thus it seems the church which is the body of Christ and Christ the head, ought to through the Holy Ghost,

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<sup>72</sup> C. O. Wittlinger, Rhoda Lee, Missionary Enthusiast, *Notes and Queries in Brethren in Christ History*, Vol. 2, Number 3, July, 1961: 14.

<sup>73</sup> *Visitor*, VIII, July 1, 1895:376.

<sup>74</sup> W. R. Hogg, *The Role of American Protestantism in World Mission*, in R. P. Beaver (ed.), *American Mission in Bicentennial Perspective*, William Carey Library, Pasadena, 1977:363. See also C. B. Goodykoontz, *Home Missions on the American Frontier*, Caldwell, Idaho, Caxton Printers, 1939

single out or separate men whom God could use in this way for the spreading of good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." Luke 2:10. Let the church in the name of the blessed master, send forth her evangelists, and pastors and teachers backed up by the prayers and bounties of a consecrated church, and the kingdom of error shall fall.<sup>75</sup>

The use of the Bible seems to have followed the denomination's adherence to the Anabaptist tradition. They were committed to the knowledge and obedience of the written scriptures. They believed the Bible to be the basis of their faith for instruction and guidance.<sup>76</sup>

As the mission advanced, another writer, Engle of Donegal, Kansas, put up a challenge in the *Visitor* of 1896, citing economic variances between the affluent Americans and the needy non-western world.

What is the reason for the lethargy concerning foreign mission? Poverty is no excuse. Lack of personnel is no problem, but we've been hiding talents under a bushel. Does the church lack impulse or convictions concerning missions?<sup>77</sup>

With the interchange of persuasive questions and allusion to the Bible, Engle appealed to the consciences of the American audience on the practical grounds of poverty and wealth. This appeal presupposed Brethren belief and conviction in the Bible as a guide in all matters of life and work, including foreign mission.

The appeal for foreign mission was not only promoted through the church's conferences and periodical. There is evidence that other churches already involved in mission work did influence the Brethren. Wittlinger states:

One of the immediate forces impelling the Brethren toward foreign mission work was their contact with four other societies - the World's Gospel Union, the Hepzibah Faith Missionary Society, the Central American Mission, and the Christian and Missionary Alliance all of which emphasised missions abroad.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> N. Zook, Missions, *Visitor*, VII, April 1, 1894:99.

<sup>76</sup> H. Jurgens-Goertz, *The Anabaptists*, Routledge, London, 196:49.

<sup>77</sup> H. N. Engle, Foreign Missions, *Visitor*, IX, February 15, 1896:52.

<sup>78</sup> C. O. Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, 1978:178. See also Schrag, "Brethren Attitudes Towards the World," 335-55

The Brethren had previously sent some of their members to the mission field through other established mission organisations.<sup>79</sup> While the presence of the other church societies was a motivating factor in the emergence of foreign missions abroad, some writers perceived them as taking the focus away from their own Brethren foreign mission. This was well observed by Lee in another challenging appeal:

We have eased our consciences by stepping into other churches and dropping a few cents into their foreign missionary collection, and decline again into carelessness. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of last September, a collection for foreign missions was taken up. Some of our best givers refused to subscribe, preferring to place their money where it could soonest be used for the salvation of souls, instead of putting it away to moths and rust to corrupt.<sup>80</sup>

With such appeal information and efforts for foreign mission, more money was raised faster than the availability of personnel to send to mission fields abroad. This phenomenon led to further focus on recruitment.

### 3.5.2. Motivation for African Overseas Missions

Some of the appeals for mission were characterised by particular perceptions of Africa and the Africans. These were used as motivation for recruiting missionaries. An anonymous poem that appeared in the *Evangelical Visitor* illustrates some of the western perceptions of Africa and the African people.

Over the ocean wave far, far away.  
The poor heathen lives, waiting the day.  
Groping in ignorance dark as the night.

Pity them; pity them, Christian at home.  
Haste with the bread of life, hasten, and come.  
Here in this happy land, we have the light  
Shining from God's own word, free, pure, and bright.

Shall we not send them Bibles to read?  
Teachers and preachers and all that they need.  
Then while the mission ships glad tiding bring,  
Listen as that heathen band joyfully sings.

'Over the ocean wave, O see them come.

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<sup>79</sup> C. O. Wittlinger, Rhoda E. Lee, Missionary Enthusiast, *Notes and Queries in Brethren in Christ History*, July, 1961, Volume 2, Number 3:13.

<sup>80</sup> R. Lee, Conference Speech, *Visitor*, VII, August 15, 1894:241- 242.

The various appeals for mission abroad revealed the Western/missionary view of Africa and the Africans. Several assumptions and perceptions were established. The western perception of Africa and the African people might be summed up in two descriptions, namely spiritual and material depravity.

The view that Africans were spiritually depraved could have arisen from the above quoted description and partly from the understanding of original sin. Despite the presence of traditional religious beliefs in Africa, the Africans were viewed as pagan, thus declaring their religion to be of no spiritual effect or value. An editorial article in the *visitor* reveals the European perception of the day:

Remember that in the heathen land men are not appreciated for what they are, but for what they possess of wealth, position and power. There is no brotherly love where Christ has not been preached....self, sinful, unregenerate, uncontrolled, and no person can portray the misery and despair caused by its [heathen] ruling. Christ can change this. He has changed it in the lives of many heathen. But he must be preached.<sup>82</sup>

Africans were perceived and treated as sinners needing spiritual salvation. In that regard, Africans did not know God in the same way that their western counterparts understood God. Thus, terms such as 'heathen', and 'pagan' were used to describe the spiritual state of the African people.

Another view that was revealed from the appeals for the foreign mission was the moral depravity of the African people.

It has been said of the coloured races in Africa that they are naturally liars, thieves, and harlots. A hard saying truly; but the more we find out of the real character of the people by whom we are surrounded the more truth we find in this saying. As a people, there is absolutely no reliability to be placed on their word, especially when they desire to shield themselves, their friends or even their tribe, or possibly they will boldly tell an untruth for the mere pleasure of it. This habit is so inbred that we have found that conversion does not always eradicate it.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Anonymous, "The Heathen Waiting the Day," *Visitor*, May 1, 1897:141. The above poem was carried in a section appealing for support for the foreign mission movement.

<sup>82</sup> Editor, "Put Yourself in His Place," *Visitor*, June 15, 1897:189.

<sup>83</sup> H. F. Davidson, "Dwellers in Darkness," *Visitor*, 12, September 1, 1900:338.

The term 'heathen' had the connotation of a people who were ignorant of the western ways of life. The African people were perceived to be poor materially and ignorant of western knowledge which was seen as superior to African knowledge.

Continued calls for foreign mission prompted some measure of response. As indicated earlier, the rate of fund raising was faster than the recruitment of missionaries. With little response from potential applicants for mission service, another probing article appeared in the January 1897 issue of the *Visitor*.

Why is it? Does the Lord not speak to some hearts...? The field is white. The harvest is ready. Who will go forth in the name of the master, filled with the Holy Ghost, ready to lay his or her life down for the cause of Christ...? Salvation to the heathen? It means something to be a missionary. It means a full sacrifice of home, friends, and self-- a perfect cutting loose.... But who will give of himself

The above quotation seems to portray an assumed image of what mission abroad was all about. The writer portrays it as a sacrificial and noble service. This presupposition of foreign mission service seems to have been a product of the preconceived idea of what Africa and African people were like. The African continent was commonly referred to as the 'Dark Continent'. This concept carried the connotation of an uncivilised domain or territory. A quick perusal of missionary literature gives rise to a number of phrases used such as heathen, native, raw one, degenerate and barbarian. While it may be difficult to ascertain whether these words carried the same connotation as the modern meaning, most of these phrases had the connotation of less civilised beings. In this regard the African was perceived and portrayed with a sense of inferiority and degradation. They were seen as morally sinful and culturally backward.

These two perceptions of the African evidently became some of the motivating factors for mission to Africa. Therefore, those who supposedly answered the 'call' to missions abroad in places such as Africa were venturing into treacherous and dangerous environments. Their health was susceptible to tropical diseases. In the

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<sup>84</sup> S. Zook, An Appeal, *Visitor*, January 15, 1897:25.



Brethren mission, Jesse Engle was among the first missionaries to die while serving in Africa.<sup>85</sup>

This observation falls in line with Baker's view of mission work. Summing up the aim of mission, Baker said:

The aim of mission is two-fold. One is to raise man from an immoral to a moral condition. The other-which is the prime object- is to point man to Christ so that he may be raised from his sinful state and brought into the glorious liberty of God's children. The former is accomplished by education. The latter by preaching Christ and him crucified.<sup>86</sup>

In this regard, Baker concurs with other writers who portray African people as needing salvation and civilisation. Accordingly, civilisation was needed because the African was perceived as an uncultured being. Some western missionaries categorically viewed African culture and tradition as degenerate.<sup>87</sup> Therefore, the African needed salvation. The African's lifestyle was immoral since it did not conform to the western view of morality. It is no wonder that such a deplorably depicted scenario necessitated the mobilisation of teachers and preachers.

The recruitment of missionaries in the Brethren in Christ church was based in large part on this two-fold perception of Africa and the African people. The desolate state of the Africans gave rise to the conviction among the Brethren that they might assist them to change from what Baker refers to as an "immoral to a moral condition."<sup>88</sup> It is worth noting that the priority of mission service for the Brethren missionaries was the salvation of Africans. Later, their efforts in educating the African would be two-fold, namely to improve their literacy levels and prepare them for the reading of the Bible.

The missionary teacher, whose task it was to instruct the African, introduced western education in an African context. There is little or no evidence from the Brethren

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<sup>85</sup>H. F. Davidson, *Diary*, March 11, 1900. Jesse Engle was the first Mission Superintendent in Africa

<sup>86</sup>C. Baker, *Mission Work, Visitor*, February 15, 1897:51.

<sup>87</sup>H. F. Davidson, *South and South Central*, Brethren Publishing House, Elgin, 1915:23. See Davidson's response to the appeal as she referred to going to worst parts of the earth, away from civilisation.... and spend my life telling the story of the cross. However, that does not take away the genuine concern for the people.

<sup>88</sup>C. Baker, *Mission Work, Visitor*, 1897: 51

records that African ways of learning were taken into consideration. The strategy of education targeted the children. The children were a better option than adults because they had not yet been fully enculturated in their own African culture.<sup>89</sup>

On the one hand, the portrayal of the African people as uncivilised and pagan was a basis for motivating new missionaries. On the other hand, such a depiction presented missionary work as a daunting task. It is not surprising that articles appeared in the *Visitor* periodical describing the mission work as a noble task.

Mission work is the greatest work ever inaugurated on earth. It was instituted by no less a personage than the Son of God. Christ was the first missionary, being as a perfect pattern for all succeeding workers. Mission work is the most sublime work that man can be engaged in.<sup>90</sup>

Such articles were aimed at appealing to some potential candidates who might have been afraid.

### 3.5.3. Composition of Personnel for Overseas Missions

Later, the recruitment to the illustrious work of mission saw the selection of five candidates. The five missionaries commissioned by the board of mission were Mr and Mrs Jesse Engle, Miss Alice Heise, Miss Barbara Hershey, and Miss H. Frances Davidson. It was presumed that all five missionaries had received a special 'call' from God to go into foreign mission work. Others would go to teach and still others to preach or share in the proclamation of the Word of God. The motivation or call to mission is well illustrated in the words of one of the first Brethren missionaries.

The day that the appeal appeared in the *Visitor*.... I thought nothing of it, but the day following the Lord came to me, as it were in the midst of classwork, in the midst of other plans for the future.... In reality, He showed me Christ was lifted up for a lost world.<sup>91</sup>

Last Friday I felt that the Lord had really called me to go into foreign mission field for him, and oh a feeling came over me. How I longed to show even in a small measure how I loved Him. Oh what blessedness filled my soul! I wept for joy. I felt so full of the love of God that I did not care for bodily food, and I feel convinced that He wants me to go and work for him, so I sent this

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<sup>89</sup> The implications of introducing western education to an African context will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

<sup>90</sup> C. Baker, *Mission Work, Visitor*, 1897: 51

<sup>91</sup> H. F. Davidson, *South, South Central Africa*, 1915: 25

morning a letter of application to the mission board and one to my dear father,<sup>92</sup> and may the Lord direct their deliberations to His glory and my good.

Having a special call from God for mission abroad was a significant factor in the selection process of missionaries. Education and other professional qualifications were not a priority in the initial stages of recruitment for Brethren missionaries. This is illustrated by the credentials of the initial team of Brethren missionaries who were sent to Africa. Frances Davidson was a teacher; Jesse Engle and his wife were farmers, Alice Heise and Barbara Hershey were both living at home with no particular profession. A strong sense of a 'call' gave them the much-needed preferred qualification for mission work abroad. Though educational qualification was not an essential factor, it is worth noting that Frances Davidson was the most qualified of the team, having received a Masters degree in education from Kalamazoo College in Michigan, in 1888.<sup>93</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the first team of Brethren missionaries to sail to Africa comprised four women and one man. The availability and willingness of women mission volunteers were common features of the times. One of the major recruiting mission agencies was the Student Volunteer Movement. The early 1900s saw the number of women involved in foreign missions rise from 60% and 67%, representing two-thirds of the American missionary work force.<sup>94</sup> In the case of the Brethren foreign mission, they represented 75% of the first missionary workers. However, in a male dominated era, men usually returned the leadership roles.

The Brethren mission was not different in advocating male leadership in mission. As the mission prepared to leave for Africa, the mission board was still soliciting for a male volunteer to assist Jesse Engle, then the leader of the team. The mission board desired to have a male assistant, despite the availability of three other single women on the team.

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<sup>92</sup> H. F. Davidson, *Diary* January 18:1897. The diary is deposited in Brethren in Christ Archives, Grantham, Pennsylvania.

<sup>93</sup> *Messiah Bible College Bulletin*, Volume XXI, May, 1930.

<sup>94</sup> W. R. Hogg, *The Role of American Protestantism in World Mission*, in R. P. Beaver (ed.), *American Missions in Bicentennial Perspective*, 1968:380.

Another significant aspect of women regarding foreign mission was in the number of those mobilised. The ratio between men and women was one-to-four. This ratio later fluctuated between 60% - 70% in favour of women missionaries. The emphasis by the Brethren Board of Mission to take on male leaders would later present unusual leadership dynamics as some Brethren women emerged as influential informal leaders.

Another significant observation was the composition of the first missionary team. There was only one 'church planter' on the first team, namely Jesse Engle. Church planters would normally be the ones that would specialise in preaching and taking care of new converts to Christianity. It must have been assumed that any western Christian with a 'call' was suitable for the propagation of Christianity in 'pagan' Africa. In responding to what they perceived as Africa's plight, the Brethren mission board commissioned five missionaries. Of the five, one was a church planter and 'elder', another an educator and the rest were women whose specialised training or profession is not indicated in the Brethren historical records.

The presence of a qualified educator on the initial team, nevertheless made the place and role of education paramount. This fulfilled the goal of educating the uncivilised African people. It was the goal of the Brethren missionaries to teach the Africans to read and write before instructing them in Bible knowledge. The Brethren, like other Protestant missions, selected education as a means of evangelising and civilising the native peoples. The Catholic school established at Chikuni mission near Monze in Zambia is a good example.<sup>95</sup> This was not only prevalent in Africa, but also common in other parts of the world such as Alaska.<sup>96</sup>

Africans at that time had been viewed as heathen and pagan. Accordingly, the uncivilised and sinful Africans needed education and the Word of God.<sup>97</sup> It must have been assumed that the education of the African was a priority. Nevertheless, the

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<sup>95</sup> B. P. Carmody, *Conversion and Jesuit Schooling in Zambia*, E. J. Brill, New York, 1992:5

<sup>96</sup> J. L. Cox, *The Impact of Christian Missions on Indigenous Cultures*, The Edwin Mellen Press, Lampeter, 1991:24, 28. Cox argues that the establishment of Alaska Methodist University among the Yuit and Inupiat peoples of Alaska provides a case study for the use of western education as a missionary strategy.

<sup>97</sup> The gospel in Brethren writings was commonly referred to as 'the Word of God'. Therefore, this thesis will use the terms interchangeably.

salvation of the spiritually lost Africans could be achieved by the work of any western Christian with a perceived 'call' to preach or share the gospel.

### **3.6. Brethren in Christ Missions: Early Leadership Structure**

The mission leadership structure was put in place before the vision was fully realised. The General Conference appointed a steering committee referred to as the Operating Committee. The Operating Committee comprised Henry Davidson, Samuel Zook, A. M Engle, H. L. Shirk, and Samuel Brehm. Their primary responsibility was to formulate the organisational structure of what was later called the Foreign Mission Board.

#### **3.6.1. Foreign Mission Board**

The formation of the Foreign Mission Board was initiated at the General Conference held in Greencastle, Pennsylvania in 1896.<sup>98</sup> The committee's first brief report presented to the General Conference read as follows:

That the Foreign Mission Board, consisting of twelve members, appointed by the General conference take charge of the foreign mission work. That it shall be the duty of the said board to take an active interest in foreign mission work in a way of soliciting contribution in their respective districts; that a report of their work shall be given to the General Conference. That in connection with the General Mission Board there shall be an Operating Board, consisting of three members to whom all applications shall be made by those whom the Lord calls into the work.

That said operating Board shall be empowered to examine all applications, who, when found worthy, shall receive recognition as workers. That all applicants must be fully consecrated to God. That one of the Operating Board [member] be treasurer of the foreign mission fund, which shall be used only to support foreign mission workers.

That the Lord shall do the calling and provide for the going. That the Operating Board make an annual report to the foreign mission board of all receipts and expenditures.<sup>99</sup>

The duties of the Foreign Mission Board as outlined in the above quoted report included, processing applications of missionary candidates, soliciting and accounting for all funds intended for foreign mission, and reporting annually to the General

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<sup>98</sup> *Minutes of the General Conference of the Brethren in Christ* from 1871-1904, Harrisburg, PA., May, 1896: 78, Hereafter to be cited as *General Conference Index*, May, 1896:78.

<sup>99</sup> *General Conference Index*, 1904: 80.

Conference. In this regard, the Foreign Mission Board functioned as a governing body for foreign mission. It operated with delegated authority from the General Conference. Later, all major decisions on the mission field were made in consultation with the Foreign Mission Board.

Hostetter makes an appropriate observation that though the General Conference did not delegate specific executive powers to the Foreign Mission Board, however, the latter functioned in that capacity from its inception.<sup>100</sup> For example, the Foreign Mission Board sanctioned permission for expansion of mission work to the north of the Zambezi. In all, the Foreign Mission Board had authority to control and administer foreign mission work.<sup>101</sup>

The Foreign Mission Board later became the platform for the motivation and recruitment of foreign mission personnel. As such it was responsible for appointing leaders on the field. A case in point was the appointment of Jesse Engle as leader of the first mission party to leave for Africa.<sup>102</sup> It is appropriate at this point to observe the significant role that Henry Davidson played in the formation of the foreign mission work of the Brethren in Christ. He was the pioneering leader of the Foreign Mission Board from its inception. Davidson later became the first president of the Board. He held this post until his death in 1903.<sup>103</sup>

His interest and active involvement enhanced his daughter's missionary progress. Frances Davidson would later acknowledge her father's role in her missionary career. Her diary entry of 1903 reads:

...but to the last, he was needed in councils of state and general councils, in pulpit as of the Foreign Mission Board, and in all these, he will be greatly missed. Especially in the latter as he is the one to whom we all looked for advice and assistance. I wrote often to him and consulted him about everything and now I can never more say 'I must write and tell father'.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> J. N. Hostetter, *Mission Education in a Changing Society: Brethren In Christ Mission Education in Southern Rhodesia*, Unpublished Dissertation, State University of New York, June, 1967: 22.

<sup>101</sup> Later the control of foreign mission by the board, raised the leadership implication during the process of indigenisation. This topic will be dealt with in more detail in subsequent chapters.

<sup>102</sup> *General Conference Index* Gromley, May, 1898.

<sup>103</sup> Henry Davidson was the father of the first missionary candidate to be officially accepted by the Foreign Mission Board.

<sup>104</sup> F. H. Davidson, *Dairy*, May 7, 1903. Hereafter will be quoted as Davidson, Diary.



Henry Davidson was instrumental in the design and development of the Brethren vision for mission. It is no wonder that he was equally a source of inspiration to his daughter, Frances Davidson.

The Foreign Mission Board was composed of only male members. The absence of female members in both the Operating Committee of five and later in the expanded board of twelve is significant.<sup>105</sup> The dominance of male leaders in the initial board had implications regarding gender and missionary leadership at a later stage. In fairness, it should be pointed out that in this era, women were not often allowed to participate in leadership. However, if the ratio of interest and support between male and female members of the Church corresponds to the availability of actual mission workers, then the exclusion of women from the mission board highlights the imbalance of gender role in mission.<sup>106</sup>

Another factor worth observing was the Board's financial responsibility and authority. No missionary could be sent to the foreign field without the endorsement of the Board. In return, all missionaries were accountable to the Board through the mission field superintendent. There was a seeming ambivalence in the selection process. Closely related to financial control, the Board played a potent role in the selection of missionary candidates. On the one hand, the 'calling' to mission work was recognised as the work of God; on the other hand, the confirmation of this call to mission was the responsibility of the Board. The seemingly subjective individual response to the missionary call was substantiated by the supposed objective appraisal of the Board.

### **3.6.2. Mission Leadership and Davidson's Role**

The Foreign Mission Board conferred the leadership of the first missionary party to Africa on Jesse Engle. He was the oldest and only married man on the team. The Board had desired to appoint another male missionary to be an assistant to Engle but no one was available. This early strategy of bypassing female missionaries had implications for future missionary leadership and would continue.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> *General Conference Index*, May, 1898

<sup>106</sup> The gender ratio of missionaries sent by the denomination was 1-4 in the initial stages as illustrated by the first team that went to Africa.

<sup>107</sup> The first missionary party comprised Jesse and Elizabeth Engle, Frances Davidson, Alice Heise and Barbara Hershey as a late addition.

Jesse Engle's missionary career lasted for less than three years (1898-1900). He became the first Brethren missionary to die on the mission field. He was born on July 19, 1838 near Bainbridge, Pennsylvania. Both parents died before he reached the age of fifteen. His godly father, Bishop Henry Engle was a major influence in his Christian conversion. He married at the early age of nineteen Elizabeth Niesley, daughter of Rev. Jacob H. Niesley of Maytown, Pennsylvania.<sup>108</sup>

Engle desired to be a missionary to Africa in his youth. However, it was not until the age of fifty-nine that he volunteered to go Africa, a place he was always inclined to serve. No record has been found regarding his educational background. It is worth noting that during this era, the Brethren did not put a high value on education. Rather, they put much emphasis on spiritual preparation for ministry.<sup>109</sup> Engle has been described as a good preacher. He served as church minister in Pennsylvania, and became the first Bishop of the newly planted church in Kansas in 1879. With the experience, he would later baptise the first African converts of nine boys and one girl in 1899.<sup>110</sup>

Prior to assuming leadership of the missionary party that sailed to Africa, Engle served as secretary of the Foreign Mission Board. His interest and commitment to mission were demonstrated in his role on the Board. His married status and ecclesiastical experience gave him an edge over others to become the first missionary superintendent.

Engle's missionary leadership began before the historic first missionary journey on board the ship *Majestic* to Africa, for their first leg of the trip, on November 24, 1897.<sup>111</sup> He became the missionary spokesman for the team. The primary assignment was to conduct campaigns with the sole purpose of promoting and raising funds for the mission trip to Africa. Engle solicited the assistance of Frances Davidson and

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<sup>108</sup> A. R. Engle, J. A. Climenhaga, L. A. Buckwalter, *There is No Difference*, E. V. Publishing House, Nappanee, 1950: 361

<sup>109</sup> On the first missionary party to Africa, only one person (Frances Davidson) had college educational qualifications.

<sup>110</sup> C. O. Wittlinger, *Quest for Piety and Obedience*, 1978: 184-5.

<sup>111</sup> E. M. Sider, *Nine Portraits: Brethren in Christ Biographical Sketches*, Evangel Press, Nappanee, 1978:165- 6. Hereafter this book will be cited as *Nine Portraits*. It has been used in this section/ chapter as the primary source for biographical information about Frances Davidson. Therefore, it will be cited more frequently.

delegated most of the speaking engagements in churches and conferences to her. It is in this sphere that Davidson begun to exert significant influence. Her mission addresses were well received by various church audiences. The exercise enabled the missionary party to raise greater mission awareness and the much-needed funds for travel costs to Africa. However, Davidson struggled with having to address mixed audiences. Being a faithful adherent to Brethren in Christ teaching on the position of women, she usually insisted that her part be preceded by the 'main message'. This apparent discomfort was alluded to the Brethren traditional women's submissive position in public religious meetings.<sup>112</sup> Davidson relied on delegated authority, which was granted to her by Engle, the leader of the missionary party.

Later, Engle delegated more duties to Davidson following her public speaking stint. The denomination's historical biographer, Sider, has described Davidson as the organiser of the first voyage to Africa.<sup>113</sup> Her determination and management skills proved essential to the missionary party. Despite the significant role she played in organising the trip, Davidson was not formally recognised as the deputy leader of the missionary party. Engle on the other hand seemed to have acknowledged the leadership skills of Davidson. Why she was not officially affirmed may be due to a combination of socio-cultural factors and Brethren ecclesiastical polity.<sup>114</sup>

The specific location of the field of work was not decided on departure from the New York harbour. All that was known was that the party was headed for Southern Africa, beyond that, all was uncertain.<sup>115</sup> After pouring over some maps, which the captain of the ship had given the missionaries, Engle was inclined to settle for the Transvaal area not too far from the coast. Incidentally, Davidson was not comfortable with the leader's choice. She was opposed to the idea. Nonetheless, she did not openly challenge Engle's suggestion. Her diary entry of December 16, 1897 indicates that her desire was to go to an area where no missionaries had been.

...since we have been in prayer over the matter as if Matebeleland would be our place of labour. All things seem to conspire in that direction. That is the place that I used to think would open up to us when I used to look at the map.

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<sup>112</sup> E. M. Sider, *Nine Portraits*, 1978: 165, 167

<sup>113</sup> E. M. Sider, *Nine Portraits*, 1978: 166

<sup>114</sup> Note in the early stage, the emphasis by the Foreign Mission Board in seeking a male assistant despite the availability females on the missionary party.

<sup>115</sup> E. M. Sider *Nine Portraits*, 1978: 167

There is plenty of *raw materials* there and few mission stations, it is under English rule, and from what we learn, the government is anxious to open it up to missionaries.<sup>116</sup>

Davidson's desire was to go to the interior of Africa where no missionary group had reached Africans. Despite her inclinations, Davidson left the final decision to the leader of the missionary party. Before arriving at Cape Town, the party had agreed to go further into the interior to Matebeleland. Later consultation with the people they met in Cape Town confirmed the suitability of the chosen mission.<sup>117</sup>

Davidson's influence on the team's decision was significant, though she was not the designated leader of the team. Such influence revealed in part her intrinsic leadership capabilities. In part, one would presume that her literary background could have helped in persuading the team to go inland. At this early stage, Davidson seemed to have displayed her ability of submission to male leadership. The designated leadership status belonged to Engle. Incidentally, Engle was the leader with a desired location for a mission field in mind, he however allowed for further discussion and consensus on the matter. Though the sole male and official leader of the group, Engle accommodated the views of the rest of the team members.

#### 3.6.2.1. Mission Leadership and Colonial Contact

The first contact upon arrival on the shores of Africa was the meeting with a European hostess by the name of Mrs Lewis, whom Davidson described as a godly woman.<sup>118</sup> The missionary party was advised to contact Cecil Rhodes. Rhodes was the head of the British South African Company. The company was responsible for the territories north of South Africa. It was the responsibility of the team leader Engle to meet with Rhodes. The outcome was a generous apportionment of a 3000-acre plot near the Matopo hills in the Matebeleland. Later the mission was named Matopo Mission after the name of the hills.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Davidson, *Diary*, December 16: 1897. Note the reference to 'raw materials' (italics are mine for emphasis). This was reference to the native Africans. Raw materials referred to the uncivilised inhabitants. Here was an example of the western missionaries' perception of Africa and Africans. In this particular case, the perception of uncivilised Africans became the motivating factor for mission.

<sup>117</sup> F. H. Davidson, *South, South Central Africa*, Brethren Publishing House, Elgin, Illinois, 1915:39.

<sup>118</sup> Davidson, *Diary*, January 1: 1898. Mrs Lewis also assisted the missionary party to travel to Bulawayo. It also likely that she introduced them to other Europeans living in Bulawayo.

<sup>119</sup> For the significance of the name Matopo Hills, see: T. O. Ranger, *Voices from the Rocks: Nature, Culture, and History in the Matopos Hills of Zimbabwe*, J. Currey, Oxford, 1999

In her diary entry of the December 16, 1897, Davidson had alluded to the fact there was an area under English rule and the government was anxious to open up the territory to missionaries.<sup>120</sup> It is significant to observe at this point the reference to the British colonial government. It is a plausible supposition that there was an underlying assumption by the missionaries that colonial government was to be their ally in the initial stage of missionary endeavour. After Cecil Rhodes granted the Brethren missionaries a letter confirming the offer of land in the Matopo hills, he is quoted as having added: "missionaries are better than policemen and cheaper."<sup>121</sup>

Rhodes' comment was very revealing considering the contextual factors of the famous Matebele rebellion and unsettled land disputes in the area. Incidentally, in this particular context the policemen were mainly used to subdue the Africans.<sup>122</sup> It is probable that Rhodes might have been insinuating collaboration in the colonisation process of the Africans. This may not have been the intention of the missionaries who already had stated their goals as being those of evangelism and education. However, the educational goal had implications for civilisation. Civilisation could have been an indirect means of pacifying the indigenous inhabitants. Adopting European ways of life implied submitting to British rule.

1898 was a significant year in the history of the Ndebele people of Zimbabwe (formerly Southern Rhodesia). It was in this year that the Matebele rebellion was suppressed.<sup>123</sup> Further, the series of wars that had begun in 1896 and ended in 1898 coincided with the famine of the remote veldt, which had its share of a severe drought. The socio-political and climatic conditions added to the already challenging and different cultural and traditional practices.

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<sup>120</sup> Davidson, *Diary*, December 16: 1897

<sup>121</sup> H. F. Davidson, *South South Central Africa*, 1915: 49

<sup>122</sup> H. F. Davidson, *South, South Central Africa*, 1915: 56

<sup>123</sup> T. O. Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia, 1896-7: A Study in African Resistance*, Heinemann, London, 1967: 114. See also T. O. Ranger, *The African Voice in Southern Rhodesia 1898-1930*, Heinemann, London, 1970. The term *Matebele* and *Ndebele* are used inter-changeably in this chapter. *Matebele* was a term commonly used in the 1890s to the people now known as the Ndebele. *Matebeleland* was the territory north of the Limpopo River where the Ndebele State was located, formerly ruled by Mzilikazi (1840-1868) and then his son, Lobengula (1870-1893). This territory which the Ndebele ruled included Shona-speaking peoples. By 1897 *Matebeleland* and the neighbouring *Mashonaland* had been conquered in the 1896 wars of "pacification" by Cecil Rhodes' British South African Company



On July 4, 1898, after waiting for almost two months in Bulawayo, the missionary party led by Engle travelled three nights and two days arriving in Matopo area on the morning of July 7, 1898. While in Bulawayo, they had been assisted by other Europeans including the Seventh Day Adventist missionaries.

### 3.6.2.2. *Mission Leadership and African Contact*

Upon arrival on the morning of July 7<sup>th</sup>, 1889, led by Engle, the missionary party prepared to meet the chief of the area who went by the name of *Hluganisa*. This meeting was necessary given the underlying tense atmosphere between the European police and the Ndebele. In a traditional fashion, the chief, accompanied by his headmen, arranged to meet the missionaries. A certain Mr. Anderson helped with the translation of the first African/ missionary dialogue. Davidson gives us some insights into the dynamics of authority in African traditional leadership in an account written at the time of arrival in Matopo.

In the meantime, the chief had sent to the headmen of the various Kraals to meet us. So in the morning, obedient to the call of their superior, they came and sat in a semi-circle while their chief addressed them (Mr. Anderson interpreting for our benefit):

"These are not like other white people."

The deep-tone voices of the headmen responded in unison, "Yes, my Lord."

He continued, "They have come to teach you and your children and to do you good."

Again came the response, "Yes my Lord."

"Now do what you can for them and help them."

And again the same response was repeated.<sup>124</sup>

Here was a demonstration of authority and loyalty. The chief's involvement of the band of headmen revealed the unified welcome given to the missionaries. This was also a display of the collective nature of African society and leadership. The unison obedience and respect for the chief demonstrated traditional authority and loyalty.

With this welcome from the Matopo traditional leaders, Engle had successfully led the missionary team to their first mission station, Matopo. The journey inland from Cape Town to Matopo hills took about six months. Engle had led the consultations with Cecil Rhodes in Cape Town, with European missionaries in Bulawayo, and lastly with traditional chiefs at Matopo. Engle was an effective missionary spokesman given the varying consultation experiences he conducted. All three major

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<sup>124</sup> H. F. Davidson, *South, South Central Africa*, 1915: 55.



contacts were essential foundations for the progress of Brethren mission work. The colonial contact with Cecil Rhodes gave the team authority to own land and work in harmony with the ruling government. The connection with the Adventist missionaries enhanced their knowledge of the missionary work in the Matebeleland. Lastly, the acceptance by the traditional leaders gave them access to the people of their primary mission. One would observe here that male leadership was significant, particularly in the case of meeting traditional leadership. Here was a patriarchal traditional leadership establishment. To get through to them with less difficulty, the presence of a male missionary leader was important.

Like many Protestant missions of their time, the Brethren missionaries began their work with education. Engle delegated the educational responsibilities to the only trained educationist on the team, Davidson. Davidson with the help of Heisey (another female missionary) started the first school at Matopo with twelve initial students.<sup>125</sup> This avenue of teaching gave Davidson an opportunity to get closer to the Africans much earlier compared to her fellow missionaries. The teaching ministry was a good avenue for Davidson's intrinsic leadership skills and influence.

Davidson's linguistic skills also helped her to identify readily with the Ndebele. She had already acquired some Zulu language while in the Cape en route to Matebeleland. A good knowledge of two native languages gave Davidson increased edge in her sphere of influence. She became the interpreter for Engle in public meetings. She also regularly visited the villages. She was a competent visitor to African villages, because she had a good grasp of the Ndebele language.<sup>126</sup>

### **3.6.3. Transition of Missionary Leadership at Matopo**

Davidson continued serving as a missionary teacher under the oversight of Jesse Engle until April 2, 1900. On that day, Engle suffered a "paralysing stroke" and died twenty-five hours later. This first major crisis had leadership ramifications for the missionary party, which had been led by Engle. Davidson records some of the immediate implications of Engle's death.

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<sup>125</sup> Davidson, *Diary*, October 2: 1898

<sup>126</sup> H. F. Sider, *Nine Portraits*, 1978: 172

As before it fell to our lot to make and drape the coffin and prepare the shroud, sit up with the dead, and worn out as I was it fell to my lot to speak to the natives in Zulu on the day of the funeral.<sup>127</sup>

Davidson held Engle in high esteem. After his death she confessed:

The mission has lost its head one who though he may have been misled in judgement in some of his undertakings, yet I feel that he was honest through it all and anxious to do the Lord's will and has gone to his reward, and is from henceforth with the Lord.<sup>128</sup>

Later Davidson would describe Engle as a man who was absorbed in the work, and no sacrifice was too great, no labour too hard for him to endure.<sup>129</sup>

Following his death Davidson temporarily assumed the leading role on the mission station. Later the General Conference appointed her to be treasurer and oversee the work in general. This was leadership by default and it was temporary. Davidson was not formally given the highest position of Mission Superintendent.

Before Engle's death, some missionaries had arrived at Matopo. The Lehmans served at the mission from 1898 and 1899, respectively.<sup>130</sup> During Davidson's brief stint of acting as a leader of the mission, some male missionaries found it hard to accept her leadership. This led to the eventual departure of Isaac and Alice Lehman, who went to join another mission programme in Johannesburg, South Africa. Though the matter was complicated by an on-going misunderstanding about the doctrine of sanctification, it seemed clear to Davidson that Lehman left because he was not ready for a female leader in mission.

Eventually, the Foreign Mission Board appointed Bishop Henry Steigerwald to take the position of Mission Superintendent. According to Sider, Davidson was in many ways the effectual leader of the mission from the beginning. Davidson exerted great influence through her administrative skills, linguistic expertise, and her speciality as the educationalist on the mission field.<sup>131</sup> However, these qualities were expressions

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<sup>127</sup> Davidson, *Diary*, July 26: 1900

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>129</sup> H. F. Davidson, *South, South Central Africa*, 1915: 101

<sup>130</sup> Alice Lehman was a founder member of the initial team of 1898. Isaac Lehman arrived at Matopo in 1899. The two got married on May 1, 1900.

<sup>131</sup> Sider, *Nine Portraits*, 1978: 176.

of her intrinsic leadership. Davidson's influence through all the above was recognised, but no formal leadership was granted to her.

With such a background, it could be anticipated that the coming of Steigerwald would create leadership complications. Davidson had been at Matopo for four of the initial demanding years. While the coming of Steigerwald took some workload off Davidson, it seems it was difficult for her to easily handover leadership. Both Steigerwald and Davidson were gifted and capable leaders in their own way. It is worth noting that Steigerwald was coming on the mission field as an ordained bishop.

Tension in leadership had been present previously. Earlier, Davidson had had difficulties coping with Jesse Engle's oversight. She would have liked to have had more autonomy with the budget and with the general administration of the school programme, which Engle had not allowed. Then there was the case of Isaac Lehman who left ostensibly because of her imposing female leadership. However, in the latter case, Davidson claimed that Lehman opposed her leadership.<sup>132</sup>

In relation to Steigerwald, the basis of leadership tension was dual sided. On the one hand, Davidson struggled with male missionaries being appointed on the basis of gender. In some cases, these leaders were stifling her initiatives and efforts. Her capabilities and evident ministerial skills gave her addition influence over her adherents and colleagues. Again, these abilities were avenues of her intrinsic leadership qualities. However, it should be pointed out that Davidson was very much aware of the denomination's position on the status of women in church leadership.<sup>133</sup> On the other hand, Engle and Steigerwald were also capable and gifted leaders. They both seemed to be committed to the traditional position of leadership. One could see why Sider alleged that Steigerwald would only see the possibility of Davidson's place as that of submission to male leaders.

It became increasingly evident that he [Steigerwald] had difficulty in conceiving that a woman, even including Frances Davidson, should be anything else except submissive to the leadership of men.

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<sup>132</sup> Sider, *Nine Portraits*, 1978: 175.

<sup>133</sup> The Brethren in Christ denomination did not allow women in public ministry and leadership in particular.

The Brethren denomination had followed a traditional philosophy of male church leadership. The socio-cultural context of Africa did not seem to help either, given the fact that it was a patriarchal society. It seemed such a scenario was not conducive to the emergence of a female leader.

It is worth noting that Steigerwald was acting within legitimate bounds when he assumed leadership of the mission. Davidson's struggles may have arisen from the fact that she was the longest serving member on the mission. Yet, the Foreign Mission Board bypassed her in choosing the leader of the mission.

The continued struggle with leadership tensions might have contributed to her growing desire to go north of Zambezi, for further mission expansion. Partly, Davidson had the desire to work with tribes in the remotest parts of Africa. Therefore, her suggestion to go north was timely. However, it does seem most plausible that her struggle with male missionary leadership contributed to her going North of the Zambezi into Zambia (Northern Rhodesia).

#### **3.6.4. Mission Leadership North of the Zambezi**

In 1904, Davidson decided to go on furlough. In the absence of a policy on mission furlough, Davidson submitted a resignation letter. Both the Foreign Mission Board and some members of her family discouraged her from resigning. Davidson's intention to move north were only fully revealed when she got to North America.

It became clear that the purpose of the extended furlough was to promote the new work she wanted to start further north into the interior. As with her first departure for Africa, Davidson planned to visit several churches in America, making mission appeals. Her first assignment was the General Conference held at Stayner, Ontario. Her mission appeal was well received by conference attendants. She not only raised a good sum of money, but the Board requested that she go to other churches promoting the cause for foreign missions.<sup>134</sup> Later the Board discussed with Davidson the plans for the new mission into the interior. They supported her idea and approved the use

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<sup>134</sup> Davidson, *Diary*, August 6, 1904. See also Sider, *Nine Portraits*, 1978: 182 and Editorial, *Visitor*, July 1, 1905: 3. The General Conference approved her plans to go north and she raised about \$2000 from mission appeals.

of the funds raised for the new work.<sup>135</sup> Approval of both the General Conference and the Foreign Mission Board was an encouraging endorsement by the two highest decision-making bodies.

In 1905 she arrived back in Matopo and began preparing for the new mission into the northern interior. Davidson selected a team of four members, including Adda Engle, Ndhlalambi Moyo, Gomo Sibanda, and herself. A Studebaker Wagon was ordered for the northern mission. However, a report reached the party that the government officials beyond the Zambezi River had warned that the interior was too unsettled for any missionary activity. According to Sider "they virtually forbade any venture that included women only."<sup>136</sup>

Both Southern and Northern Rhodesia were under British chartered rule. At that time, the land belonged to the British South African Company. Indigenous people, such as the Tonga, were already being organised in what later became the native reserves, which were restricted enclaves for Africans.<sup>137</sup>

Few mission organisations had penetrated into Zambia. The earliest missionary efforts were by Francis Coillard of the Paris Missionary Society who established a mission at Sefula in 1885.<sup>138</sup> Other known groups at the time were the Primitive Methodists who established mission work among the Ila people at Namwala. The Ila people are a related tribe to the Tonga people. The Jesuit Fathers initiated work much further north in Chikuni area near Monze. Another mission group was the Seventh Day Adventists who established their work at Lusangu near Monze. Yet, no work had been established among the Tonga of Macha area.

One of the causes for little or no mission work having been done in the area was the prevalent death rate of missionaries. A militant tribe known as the Makololo who settled in the upper Zambezi killed some of the early missionaries.<sup>139</sup> Both western

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<sup>135</sup> Sider, *Nine Portraits*, 1978: 185.

<sup>136</sup> Sider, *Nine Portraits*, 1978: 184.

<sup>137</sup> H. S. Meebelo, *Reaction to Colonialism*, 1971, p. 190. Under the Lands Commission of 1920, the chartered company provided separate land for Africans, thus affording European settlers better land to grow more cash crops.

<sup>138</sup> R. Henkel, *Christian Missions in Africa*, Dietrich Reimer Verlag, Berlin, 1989: 29.

<sup>139</sup> H.F. Davidson, *South, South Central Africa*, 1915: 248. Makololo warriors were responsible for the death of the first party of missionaries to this part of the country.

missionaries and African workers died in the process of preaching to the Barotse people. Davidson cites the death of one of the African evangelists, by the name of Eleazer.

In the opening up of that work, Christian natives from Basutoland, a thousand miles further south, volunteered to accompany Coillard. It is said, 'just on the border, of Barotseland, one of the evangelists, Eleazer died.'<sup>140</sup>

The role of indigenous Africans in mission continued in various ways as western missionaries penetrated the interior.<sup>141</sup> This was the case with the Brethren in Christ who were also accompanied by two Africans (Moyo and Sibanda) on their mission north of the Zambezi. Davidson was the leader of the Brethren mission party that left Bulawayo for Northern Rhodesia. The team comprised two missionary ladies, Davidson and Adda Engle and two Africans, Ndhlalambi Moyo and Gomo Sibanda. Davidson in her diary entry states: "On Tuesday morning we started - sister Engle and myself, besides Ndhlalambi and Gomo, two native helpers."<sup>142</sup> In her book, Davidson stated:

Our company included besides Sister Engle and myself, the two native Christian boys, Ndhlalambi Moyo and Gomo Sibanda. The latter was going chiefly for manual labour. They were both trustworthy and we knew they could be trusted.<sup>143</sup>

The mention of Africans on the team as helpers is significant here. Sider in his reference to government officials did not describe the Africans as missionaries.<sup>144</sup> However, much later Ndhlalambi became one of the teachers at the mission north of the Zambezi. According to Davidson, "Ndhlalambi had felt called some time before to carry the gospel beyond the Zambezi." Ndhlalambi had previously worked faithfully alongside Davidson at Matopo and Mapani mission stations. Davidson had described Gomo as one who would help with manual labour. This was not specified for Ndhlalambi. At another instance, Davidson described the

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<sup>140</sup> H. F. Davidson, *South, South Central Africa*, 1915: 249.

<sup>141</sup> T. Jack. Thompson, *Touching the Heart: Xhosa Missionaries to Malawi 1876-1888*, University of South Africa, Pretoria, 2000. P.29. The book is a narrative of a classic model of indigenous contribution to missionary work in Africa. The story of Xhosa Evangelists is Thomspson's significant contribution to the larger subject of African initiatives in Christian missions.

<sup>142</sup> Davidson, *Diary*, July 11, 1906

<sup>143</sup> H. F. Davidson, *South, South Central Africa*, 1915: 243.

<sup>144</sup> See Sider, *Nine Portraits*, 1978: 184.



two Africans as native Christian boys.<sup>145</sup> Davidson's early writings revealed her paternalistic view of Africans. She wrote regarding the natives as follows:

Day by day we were learning the nature of the people about us, and were obliged to adjust ourselves to our changed understanding. They are all children and must be dealt with accordingly. He [the missionary] must also be firm in his dealings with the natives and make them know their place. Old children are more difficult to handle than young ones, as they are more unreasonable and more set in their ways.<sup>146</sup>

One of the contributing factors to this demeaning description of older Africa male could have been the fact that they were once her pupils in school. Though the ages of the two Africans are not known, one could logically assume that they were not teenagers. It was common at that time to regard African men as "boys". However, when the missionary party arrived at Macha, the villagers acknowledged them as Matebele men.<sup>147</sup> Later when the same men were able to teach or preach from the Bible, they were called native evangelists. This term differentiated them from missionaries. This tendency must have perpetuated the 'helper' syndrome of Africans to missionaries.

Contact with the colonial government official was an important part of establishing mission work. They were responsible for allocating land. Davidson noted in her book, "Mr Jackson, the English magistrate at Fort Ursher, gave us letters of introduction to the civil commissioner and administrator of Northern Rhodesia as the country north of the Zambezi was called." The letters were used to acquire land for mission stations.<sup>148</sup>

The government officials north of the Zambezi were a little hesitant to allow the missionary party to proceed. In the past, the northern interior was too unsettled for missionary activity. It could also be argued that the government officials hesitated due to the absence of a white male on the missionary party. However, seeing the determination of the two female missionaries they were allowed passage to Kalomo

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<sup>145</sup> Davidson, *South, South Central Africa*, 1915: 243.

<sup>146</sup> Davidson, *South, South Central Africa*, 1915: 86.

<sup>147</sup> Bina Addie (Widow of one of the first African Evangelists, Mizinga), *Interview*, May 29, 1984. Cited from interviews conducted by Esther Spurrier. See, Hist. Mss. 40-1.1, Messiah BIC archives, Grantham, PA

<sup>148</sup> H. F. Davidson, *South, South Central Africa*, 1915: 243.

and later to Chief Mapanza's area. It is interesting to note that the colonial officials did not take into account the presence of the two male Africans. They were regarded merely as helpers to the missionaries.

After overcoming the obstacle of a broken wagon, the team set out for Kalomo district some 110 miles away. While in Livingstone, the two women studied the area around Kalomo. They decided on a place north of Kalomo known as Mapanza sub-district. Here they met another District Commissioner. He granted permission cautiously and on condition that they should build structures before the rainy season. With the assistance of the local people, their missionary party reached Mapanza sub-district. Eventually the team settled at Macha near the river, about 14 miles from Mapanza. It took six weeks to travel from Matopo to Macha.

They set out to erect buildings with the help of local people, thus fulfilling the requirement of the District Commissioner. The working relationship of colonial officials and missionaries was essential. It was a symbiotic relationship. The colonial officials normally granted missionaries passage to remote parts of the country. Missionaries lived closer to the natives than any other European of their time. Therefore, missionaries provided necessary information about the natives to colonial officials.

Davidson's journey into the interior without a white male was a source of continued concern for both colonial officials and the Foreign Mission Board. Having completed the buildings before the rainy season, the missionary party settled in Macha. However, both colonial officials and the Foreign Mission Board requested that the missionary party return to Kalomo before the rainy season.

The government's request did not bother Davidson since the party had fulfilled the requirement of erecting buildings before the rainy season. However, the directive from the Foreign Mission Board bothered her. She replied to the Board that the missionaries would remain in Macha. She interpreted the Foreign Mission Board instruction as an attempt to disrupt her missionary venture. Her diary entry reveals her disappointment and determination to proceed with her plans.

For one thing, we learn that the Board is not pleased because we came on alone. I am sorry, but then how were we to know their wishes when they never intimated in the least that they did not want us to come. I know the Lord bid us come and that is enough whatever man may have to say and He has certainly been taking care of us.<sup>149</sup>

This incidence among other things revealed the leadership role of the Foreign Mission Board on the mission field. The Board had direct authority and control of activities on the foreign field. It was evident that the Board desired male missionary leadership. Davidson might have felt ignored in her leadership role. Her confession and claim of the “Lord’s bidding” could indicate her contention that God was the source of her authority in leadership. This could be interpreted as spiritual authority in leadership. In Davidson’s estimation, spiritual authority was superior to that of the Mission Board. This apparent leadership tension would continue in Davidson’s missionary pursuit.

By January 1906, Davidson and the team proceeded with their planned mission activities. As in Matopo, Southern Rhodesia, the team embarked on the same strategy of mission starting with education. The opening of school was delayed by non-availability of children. One assumption was that children were afraid of white people. Macha was a remote place. The early attempts to attract children for the school were met with suspicion and fear. Davidson described the Tonga children at Macha as being more timid than those at Matopo were. Most children had not seen any Europeans before the arrival of the missionaries.

With no school children, Davidson, Engle, and the two African companions, Ndhilambi and Gomo called for a week of prayer. Whenever in crisis, Davidson usually resorted to the discipline of prayer. This was another demonstration of her spiritual authority in mission work and leadership.

Chief Macha, the traditional leader of the villages took his son as the first child to be enrolled in school. Subsequently, more children were sent by their parents to start school. Davidson later claimed that that was a direct answer to prayer.<sup>150</sup> Chief Macha’s action was not unique. A similar incidence occurred in the efforts of

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<sup>149</sup> Davidson, *Diary*, December 29, 1906

<sup>150</sup> Davidson, *South, South Central Africa*, 1915: 279.

Frederick Arnot the Paris Missionary Society missionary among the Lozi people.<sup>151</sup> It revealed the influence and impact of African traditional leadership.

Alongside the establishment of schools, Davidson learned the local language and this enabled her to visit villages. She personally went to seek permission from traditional leaders in order to open schools in their villages. Knowing the local language granted her linguistic authority, which gave her an edge in her identification with the indigenous population.

Before long, a white male missionary was sent to Macha. In November 1907, Myron Taylor, a single missionary, joined the Macha Mission team. Quite early in his stay at Macha, Taylor stated that he was to be committed to evangelism rather than remain stationary at the mission station. Taylor's arrival at Macha Mission was just the beginning of more male missionaries to the station.

In June 1908, Steigerwald, the Mission Superintendent of Southern Africa, escorted Jesse and Docia Wenger to Macha. The presence of two white male missionaries posed leadership implications. Jesse Wenger was "a hands-on-man" involved in building. Taylor was an evangelist. Both men specialised roles would supplement Davidson's educational role at Macha Mission.

However, Davidson would later express dissatisfaction with the roles of both men, owing to Wenger's sickness and Taylor impromptu departures for village evangelism. It was not clear, at this point, whether or not Davidson was formally in charge of the Macha Mission station. This uncertainty on both parties could have led to the leadership tension arising yet again. Davidson being one of the founders of the mission, perceived of herself as leader of the mission.<sup>152</sup> As Sider rightly observes, both parties must have felt threatened by the presence of the other.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> P. Snelson, *Educational Development in Northern Rhodesia 1883-1945*: 29. Chief Lewanika was the first Lozi parent to send his son to school opened by Father Arnot. The chief went further by instructing one of his attendants or policemen to send his nephew to school.

<sup>152</sup> Davidson, *Diary*, January 17, 1909. See also M. Sider, *Nine Portraits*, p. 191. Note Davidson's complaint of Taylor not getting permission either from Steigerwald or her. This was an indirect way of communicating that her leadership was being undermined.

<sup>153</sup> M. Sider, *Nine Portraits*, 1978: 180

### 3.6.4.1. First Leadership Tension at Macha

Soon the main contributing factors to these tensions were linked to Steigerwald's briefing of both Taylor and Wenger about Davidson's role before they arrived at the Macha Mission station. Sider observes that another factor was the General Conference's clear pronouncement of Steigerwald's authority as Bishop over all Brethren in Christ Missions in Africa. It was Steigerwald's responsibility to resolve the tension. At that point, Davidson must have felt outnumbered by men and pushed on the defensive in the conflict at hand. Left with the two options of either accepting the blame or resigning, Davidson opted for the latter. However, the resignation was not accepted. What remained unanswered was the reason why the Board did not clearly spell out the leadership status and expectation at Macha Mission station.

The Macha crisis that came to a head in April 1909 was a case of gender and mission leadership. The tension prompted the coming of Steigerwald to resolve the matter at Macha. He later frankly and categorically told Davidson, as noted in her diary, that she needed to work under male leadership.

Brother Steigerwald told me that they thought I had taken the place of a man long enough and the time had come for me to be in subjection. He says that I went home for the purpose of getting money to get a place to run myself and that I did not want a man to have charge.<sup>154</sup>

Steigerwald's charge seemed to have disturbed Davidson. His assertion did not seem far-fetched. At the beginning of foreign mission, the General Conference and the Foreign Mission Board had clearly desired male leadership on the mission field.<sup>155</sup> Her diary entry of August 6, 1899 revealed her desire:

...to go out *alone* in some obscure corner of this country where Christ had not been named and work to the saving of souls and not caring whether any one ever heard of me again only so that I might work *unhindered* to the saving of precious souls.<sup>156</sup>

It seemed that Davidson was conscious of male interruption of her desired mission goal. Urban-Mead in her article: *Unwomanly Woman*, similarly observed that male

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<sup>154</sup> Davidson, *Diary*, June 17, 1909

<sup>155</sup> *General Conference Minutes*, May 19, 1897

<sup>156</sup> Davidson, *Diary*, August 8, 1899. (Italics are mine for emphasis.)

leaders had frustrated Davidson's attempts to realise the mission work she thought God had called her to do.<sup>157</sup>

It is no wonder that she would go further and record her disturbing dilemma: "They acknowledge the Lord uses me and speaks through me and yet say that I have been much out of place otherwise because I have not been in subjection as a woman should. How can the Lord use me if I am so much out of place?"<sup>158</sup>

Her struggle epitomised the varying views on leadership in mission. On the one hand, the Foreign Mission Board was sending a clear message of male mission leadership. Steigerwald's sentiments in his capacity as mission superintendent (Bishop) seemed to have communicated the prevailing philosophy that mission leadership must be male. On the other hand, Davidson, co-founder of both Matopo and Macha Missions, perceived the leadership role as open to both male and female. This she justified by her own mission experience.

Davidson's argument seemed to presuppose that effective missionary ministry was the same as leadership. She must have assumed that having moved away from Matopo, she now was leader of Macha Mission in her own right. This could have been a probable reason why the affirmation of Steigerwald's leadership over all the work in Southern Africa disturbed Davidson. She presumed the establishment and progress of the mission work at Macha were justification enough for her right to lead, at least in Macha itself.

After Steigerwald went back to Matopo, Davidson remained agonising over the apparent misconception of her leadership role by other members of the mission. Her argument was that God had chosen to accomplish much through her work. Therefore, gender was not a major factor in mission leadership.

They seem to want me to remain at Macha although they think a man should be in charge. Then too I cannot yet see that I have been so much out of place if I have had charge and did some of the things, which falls to the lot of man. My training before coming to the field was more of a man than a woman. I worked with men as a member of the faculty and was treated as an equal, and no doubt because He saw I would listen. Had He wanted a nice modest

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<sup>157</sup> W. Urban-Mead, 'Unwomanly Woman,' 2001: 33.

<sup>158</sup> Davidson, Diary, June 17, 1909



womanly woman, He no doubt would have chosen such. I had felt that I was misunderstood ever since I have been in the mission field, and that feeling has become a conviction.<sup>159</sup>

The above argument was the basis for Davidson's stance on mission leadership. One could not take away from Davidson her significant contribution to the pioneering work of the Brethren in Christ Mission. To her credit, she was the first missionary candidate in the denomination. She assisted Jesse Engle in the early organisation and in the location of the first mission station at Matopo. Another milestone was the founding of the Macha Mission station. All the above were daring mission ventures in mostly unknown locations.

However, the provisions and expectations of mission leadership were different from Davidson's propositions. She was of the opinion that her educational qualifications, God's call to missions, and faithful accomplishment of mission activities were sufficient reasons to warrant endorsement for leadership. On those grounds, Davidson claimed that she was well suited, if not better suited for mission leadership than a man was. She further argued that all acknowledged that the launching of Macha Mission was a commendable opening, yet it seemed that those who went through the initiating process of the mission were not fit to carry it on.<sup>160</sup>

The main point of divergence between Davidson and the Mission Board was the matter of gender in mission leadership. The denominational policy, represented by the Mission Board, was that mission leadership was confined to male missionaries. The practice was demonstrated in the appointment of the first mission superintendent and the search for a male assistant. Nevertheless, the Board did acknowledge Davidson's significant contribution to the cause of Brethren mission. This is reflected in one of Davidson's diary entries. She quotes the Board's sentiments as follows: "For you to step down and out would be most disastrous to our work in Africa, since you were one of the original band to the Dark Continent, and you held the confidence of the church at large." The Board further scheduled a local African furlough for Davidson. During the same time, her close companion Adda Engle got married to Taylor. For Davidson this was a big loss. It seemed that the African furlough was a

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<sup>159</sup> Davidson, *Diary*, July 17, 1909

<sup>160</sup> Davidson, *Diary*, July 17, 1909

necessary and timely break. Taylor was then asked to head the work at Macha in her absence.

On her return to Macha, Davidson continued her educational work, opening the first out-school in 1910.<sup>161</sup> Further deliberations on change of leadership at Macha soon revealed Davidson's willingness for Taylor to take charge. By now, Taylor had intensified his plans to open a new mission station, the future Sikalongo Mission.

I told the brethren that I was alone and I saw that it seemed to be the best and the only thing to put Brother Taylor in charge. They say that it is my work especially and they feel that the oversight should not be changed. If there was someone to come and help carry on the work, Brother Taylor says he felt called to the tribe north of this, but was willing to stay and take charge here if the board said so, so it is left that way until definite arrangements are made.<sup>162</sup>

This temporary arrangement of leadership at Macha Mission remained with Taylor taking charge of the station until he and his wife left to be founders of Sikalongo Mission in 1917.

In 1914, Davidson went on furlough for 18 months to America. This trip resulted in the writing and publication of the book: *South, South Central Africa: A Record of Fifteen Years' Missionary Labours Among Primitive Peoples*. This book put a stamp on her literary authority in the Brethren in Christ Mission. It was the first printed document on the history of foreign Brethren in Christ Missions. Davidson completed her furlough with another successful mission promotion at the General Conference, which resulted in raising more funds for the work at Macha Mission.

Before 1915, there was a proliferation of out-schools established in outlying villages. Davidson purposed to fulfil what she perceived as the two main objectives of mission work.

There are two objects, which seem paramount on the mission field, and about which everything else revolves. These are (1) the salvation of souls, and (2) the preparation of natives to become teachers and evangelists of their people.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> The 'out-schools' were established in villages away from the mission station. African teachers usually led the schools.

<sup>162</sup> Davidson, *Diary*, November 4, 1909

<sup>163</sup> Davidson, *South, South Central Africa*, 1915: 440.

The role of native teachers was indispensable to the process of fulfilling the two objectives. Apart from regular lessons of reading and writing, native teachers taught religious lessons. Davidson noted in her book:

If the schools are too far away for pupils to attend church services at the mission, arrangements are made for services to be held more or less frequently at the schools. The native teachers also hold daily worship and scripture reading with their schools, and all others who desire to attend.<sup>164</sup>

The result of this teaching arrangement was that native teachers took two roles in out-schools. They were both teachers and local pastors. The preparation they received for the latter role is not clearly known.<sup>165</sup> However, this points to the earliest efforts at developing indigenous people for leadership. This was not the only instance in which Davidson delegated teaching responsibilities to Africans. While at Matopo, Davidson had allowed Matshuba to teach school in her absence.<sup>166</sup>

Despite her ability to delegate such responsibility to African teachers, Davidson was known to have remained essentially patronising in her attitude towards Africans. Sider records Davidsons's impressions of Africans and African culture:

She remained convinced to the end of her career of the "raw" nature of their heathenism, with "its ugliness, its licentiousness, its demon possession and worship, its false prophets, its witchcraft."<sup>167</sup>

However, Davidson recognised that she did not fully understand the Africans even after living among them for a long time. Her perception of Africans was based on her experiences of living and working among both the Ndebele (Matopo) and the Tonga (Macha). Nevertheless, Davidson did also have a positive image of Africans. Sider suggests that "she found the Batonga around Macha to be loving and obedient, sometimes too much so because many Europeans took advantage of them."<sup>168</sup> Davidson acknowledged that the Tonga people were resourceful in manufacturing,

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<sup>164</sup> Davidson, *South, South, Central Africa*, 1915: 443.

<sup>165</sup> At this early stage, there wasn't any formal theological training available. One would only assume that the teachers were informally trained to pastor out-school churches. Moreover, Davidson was not a trained church planter.

<sup>166</sup> Davidson, *South, South Central Africa*, 1915: 214.

<sup>167</sup> Sider, *Nine Portraits*, 1978: 201.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

working and cooking utensils. Weapons for war, hunting and domestic purposes such as axes, assegais, hoes, and troughlike nets were available before the Europeans arrived.<sup>169</sup> There does seem to be contradictions in the way Davidson perceived Africans. One reason could be that the positive side of Africans was overlooked, at the expense of negative traits.

Despite some measure of goodness and creativity, the African was perceived as less civilised than the European. The African was judged by the standards of western knowledge and experience. Such western missionary attitudes and perceptions about Africa and the African must have had implications for slowing the pace of indigenisation of Christian faith and leadership.

Despite ambivalent views regarding mission leadership, Macha had a stream of constantly changing missionaries, yet Davidson maintained some steady years of service at the station. It is believed that she was the longest serving missionary of her time in the Brethren in Christ denomination.<sup>170</sup> Notwithstanding Davidson's long missionary service and intrinsic leadership qualities, the Foreign Mission Board deputation team of 1921 again recommended that Macha Mission needed a male missionary leader.

The deputation team's initial proposition to the Foreign Mission Board was to send two men to Macha. Following this recommendation, the Foreign Mission Board suggested to the Executive Board that Myron Taylor move back from Sikalongo to head Macha Mission. That suggestion was met with reservation from other mission workers. This resulted in the Executive Board in Africa deciding to put the matter to the vote. For that purpose, the Executive Board nominated five male missionaries for the leadership position at Macha. The successful candidate was to be given charge of the entire work at Macha.<sup>171</sup> The result of the election went in favour of Lester Myers.

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<sup>169</sup> South, *South Central Africa*, 1915: 362-363.

<sup>170</sup> She served in the Brethren Mission from 1898-1922, a total of 24 years of service.

<sup>171</sup> Davidson, *Diary*, March 16, 1924. Note significant absence of female candidates among the nominated missionaries. See also Executive Board Minutes, October 2-5, 1922, in Irwin W. Musser papers, BIC Archives, Messiah College, Grantham, PA

### 3.6.4.2. Second Leadership Tension at Macha

The new leadership structure at Macha forced Davidson to leave. According to Davidson's diary account:

It would have been a difficult place both for me and brother Myers who was appointed to take charge. The natives had been accustomed to come to me with their problems and desire for advice.<sup>172</sup>

Davidson presumed that it would have been unfair for her to work under Myers given the fact that people were more used to consulting her. For that reason and the fact that her furlough was then due after serving for seven years, she decided to leave Macha permanently. However, the opinion of the chairman of the Executive Board in Africa at the time was that Davidson was not willing to be supervised by a male missionary.<sup>173</sup> Davidson's diary entry reflects that bitter struggle to let go of the work she had founded at Macha. Her reaction to the Board's decision displayed pain and struggle.

This of course meant that whoever it was be given charge of the out-schools and village work as well as Macha station. In other words that [meant] the entire work which I had worked hard sixteen years to help build up was swept from me in a moment. The night was spent in prayers and weeping, but by morning I felt satisfied that if this was carried in that form that it was the Lord's will for me to return home....<sup>174</sup>

Her departure from Macha ended a legacy of the female missionary who attempted to lead mission work in southern Africa, however, not without significant impact. The European community she associated with while serving there affirmed her twenty-five years missionary service in Africa. She would later record in her diary, "the white missionaries of other churches and the government officials and white people seemed sorry to have me go and have sent me a nice testimonial of the work signed by 33 white people."<sup>175</sup> Some missionaries from other churches petitioned the

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<sup>172</sup> Davidson, *Diary*, March 16, 1924

<sup>173</sup> John A. Climenhaga, *Interview*, by James R Shelly at Messiah Home, Harrisburg, PA. May 4, 1968. Davidson served under Climenhaga while he was mission superintendent. The interviews are available in the BIC archives, Messiah, PA.

<sup>174</sup> Davidson, *Diary*, March 16, 1924

<sup>175</sup> Davidson, *Diary*, Messiah BIC Archives.

Brethren Mission Superintendent to persuade Davidson to return to Macha Mission.<sup>176</sup>

Equally significant was the letter written by Africans to the Foreign Mission Board, protesting that they did not know why Davidson had left and requesting the Board to allow her to return to Macha. At this time, Davidson had decided not to return to Africa. It is not clear whether or not both parties were petitioning for her leadership or general missionary service. The records are not specifically clear. It does seem as though both Europeans and Africans would have readily supported her continued work at Macha as a missionary teacher.

She arrived in America in 1923. Sider suggests that she consulted with Christian Hostetter, Chairman of the Foreign Mission Board, with little or no satisfaction. Later she met with the whole Foreign Mission Board at the General Conference held in Gromley, Ontario. The result was that all members of the Board stood by the decision to change the leadership at Macha. At this point, Davidson decided to drop the matter.<sup>177</sup> The rejection of Davidson's further appeal to the highest decision-making body signalled the endorsement of a supposed philosophy of exclusively male missionary leadership.

By August 1924, she had accepted the invitation to teach at Messiah Bible School, in Grantham, Pennsylvania. Davidson continued to struggle with her desire for mission work. While at Messiah Bible School she became an active member of the Missionary Society. Though this organisation and other opportune avenues, Davidson promoted and informed students about the challenge of missionary work. She was later invited to be editor of the Foreign Mission Department of the Church's periodical, *Visitor*. She ended her missionary career in the same way she had begun, promoting and campaigning for missions. Though not a designated leader, Davidson was, in effect, intrinsically a mission leader from the very inception of the Brethren mission.

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<sup>176</sup> Sider, *Nine Portraits*, p. 211. Quoted from letter of Rev. J. W. Price to Mr and Mrs Frey, Kasenga, Northern Rhodesia, December 30, 1922. Christian Hostetter papers, BIC Archives, Grantham, PA.

<sup>177</sup> Sider, *Nine Portraits*, 1978: 203.



### 3.7. The Question of Gender and Missionary Leadership

The Foreign Mission Board had adopted a philosophy of male missionary leadership from its inception. Formally elected foreign mission leaders were all men. This was reflected in the composition of the first twelve members of the Foreign Mission Board. Furthermore, the first missionary superintendent in southern Africa was male. The basis for this philosophy of leadership was not deliberately outlined; however, it could be deduced from various prevailing ecclesiastical and socio-cultural factors within the denomination. One would suppose that the church's literal interpretation of the Bible was one of the contributing factors. Davidson's effective, but informal leadership was intrinsic rather than designated.

Frances Davidson was a missionary leader before her time. It was not unique, but unusual, for a woman to assume missionary leadership in her era (late 1800s and early 1900's). The Student Volunteer Movement was one of the organisations that enrolled them.<sup>178</sup> By 1890, women comprised 60% of the total American missionary force.<sup>179</sup> However, the male missionaries dominated the leadership role in foreign missions. The prevailing leadership practice was well captured in 1888 by the Secretary of the American Baptist Missionary Union. He said, "Women's work in the foreign field must be careful to recognise the headship of man in ordering the affairs of the Kingdom of God."<sup>180</sup> The Brethren Foreign Mission followed a similar pattern.

Davidson emerged as a leader almost by default in the prevailing context. She was the denomination's first missionary candidate and the most educated to go to the foreign mission field. However, the Foreign Mission Board chose Jesse Engle, a former Bishop, and Secretary of the same Board as the leader. It was through the delegated mission activities that Davidson demonstrated her intrinsic leadership. The organisation of the first voyage to Africa and location of its first mission field were orchestrated by Davidson. One would safely conclude that her educational background contributed to her authority on the mission field. Nonetheless, her authority was accepted and yet not honoured in formal leadership. Generally, the denomination did not value formal educational qualifications highly. The pietistic

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<sup>178</sup> W. R. Hogg, *The Role of American Protestantism in World Mission*, in R. P. Beaver, *American Mission in Bicentennial Perspective*, 1968: 380.

<sup>179</sup> J. Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in the turn-of-the Century*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1984: xiii

<sup>180</sup> J. Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility*, 1984: 14. See also Beaver, *American Protestant Women*, 1968: 184.

roots of the denomination must have contributed to this attitude as personal piety was held in high regard.

In one sense, Davidson may be regarded as a marginalised female leader on the foreign field. She combined literary skills with spiritual fervour. She demonstrated it with remarkable personal piety. At the beginning of her missionary career, she claimed that God had specifically 'called' her to mission work.<sup>181</sup> This claim of the 'call' from God meant that she discarded her college teaching career in obedience to God's command. Her spiritual fervour included constant reference to her discipline of prayer. Her diary is littered with occasions of Davidson praying for God's will for her life.<sup>182</sup> She was so fundamentally committed to seeking what she termed, 'God's will', that she was ready to disobey seemingly contrary human directives. The claim of a personal inner 'call' was subjective, but authoritative for her because it was accompanied by divine claim. She was convinced it was from God. As Urban-Mead rightly explains: "the called individual was responding to a direct communication of divine authority. If one accepts the validity of an individual call, then to interfere with such a calling would be to defy the will of God."<sup>183</sup> While this position would have given Davidson some space for operation over against what might have been deemed a patriarchal leadership, it could also be abused in defiant insubordination. However, it would be used as an escape from submission to male leadership.

Nonetheless, the claim to have received a personal inner 'call' and the discipline of praying for God's will, became for Davidson the basis of her spiritual authority. It was the motivating factor for achieving most, if not all of her missionary activities. Spiritual authority was recognised but not honoured with regard to formal leadership. Spiritual authority was an avenue for Davidson's intrinsic leadership on the foreign mission field.

Davidson's linguistic authority enhanced her intrinsic leadership. Her educational background revealed that she studied Greek and Latin. Such formal linguistic

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<sup>181</sup> Davidson, *Diary*, January 18, 1897

<sup>182</sup> Davidson, *Diary*, January 30, 1881, September 17, 1893, March 2, 1895, December 4, 1897, March 23, 1904. There are many other instances where Davidson prayed to be directed by God in her missionary work. These prayers could be a resource for further research in the spirituality of Anabaptist women missionaries.

<sup>183</sup> W. Urban-Mead, 'Unwomanly Woman,' 2000: 12

education became the basis of learning African languages on the mission field. Davidson learned Zulu, Ndebele and Tonga.

The knowledge of African languages (Zulu, Ndebele, and Tonga) assisted her identification with the indigenous people. Knowing the native language enabled Davidson to learn more about the indigenous cultural and traditional beliefs. Davidson's linguistic skills enabled her to teach effectively and authoritatively. She exerted the most visible influence through teaching and village visitation. At that time, Davidson was the only Brethren in Christ missionary who could competently communicate with Africans in their native language. It could be argued that she had more influence and exerted more authority upon the Africans than any of the other missionaries. Even Engle, the designated missionary leader, relied on Davidson's linguistic skill for interpretation and translation in his preaching and teaching work.

The first step in Brethren mission strategy was the establishment of a school. The medium of instruction was usually the native language. Davidson's adequate hold of the local language made her an effective teacher and head of the school. To the Africans, she must have appeared as the visible leader. Proficiency in local native language translated into influence and authority over the Africans. Davidson demonstrated her intrinsic leadership through competent linguistic authority.

Despite Davidson's literary, spiritual and linguistic authority, she remained undesignated as a leader. Some of the underlying factors could have included socio-cultural and ecclesiastical influences. In the first place, Davidson was coming out of a North American socio-cultural milieu, which did not perceive women as equals at the time. For example, it was not until 1920 that women in North America had the right to vote. Secular society hardly made room for female formal leadership. It can be said that leadership was largely patriarchal.

In the second place, Davidson was a Brethren woman. A good Brethren woman was expected to learn in silence and in submission to male leadership. As was earlier mentioned the Brethren ecclesiastical roots included two religious streams, Anabaptism and Pietism. According to the Anabaptist tradition, women were forbidden to conduct public ministries such as preaching and baptising. In the early days of the Reformation, they were not allowed to elect church elders. However,

women in Anabaptist tradition excelled as lay missionaries. They were independent bearers of Christian convictions.<sup>184</sup>

In the third place, there was the African cultural milieu. In both the Ndebele and Tonga cultures, the status of a woman was subservient to that of a man. For example, though the Tonga people are matrilineal (in inheritance), they practise patriarchal leadership.

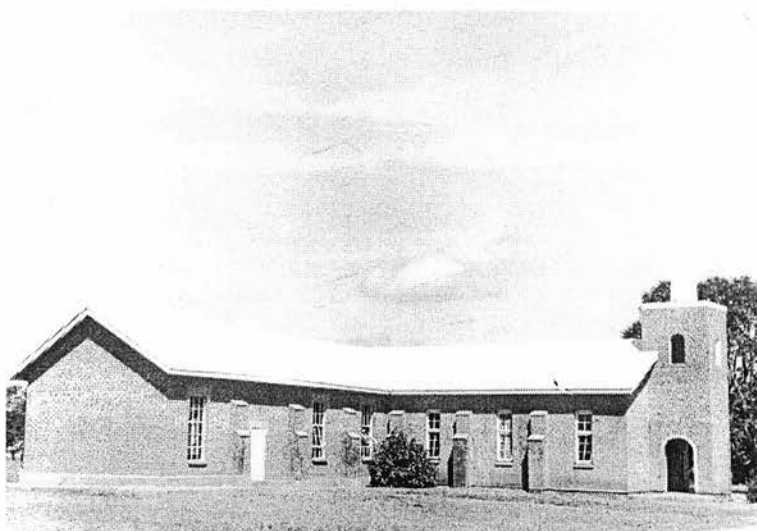
It must be pointed out though that in most cases western missionaries seemed to operate oblivious of existing African cultural values. While tension regarding gender and mission leadership was on the rise, there was no mention of its implications for African traditional values.

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<sup>184</sup> W. Schaufele, *The Missionary Vision and Activity of Anabaptist Laity*, in W. R. Shenk, (Ed) *Anabaptism and Mission*, Herald Press, Scottdale, PA, 1984: 79. See also H. Jurgen-Goertz, *The Anabaptist*, 1978: 114. Women were in the majority in the Anabaptist membership.



*Plate # 2. Original Macha Church*



*Plate # 3. Modified Church*

### **3.8. Summary and Conclusion**

The period 1898 to 1925 was a phase of establishing the Brethren in Christ mission efforts overseas. The impact of the Trans-Atlantic migration had led to the founding of the Brethren in Christ denomination. This chapter has traced the link of the church to the Anabaptist tradition. Historically, Anabaptists shared the important fundamental beliefs of the Protestant reformers, but with their own particularity. To this day, the Brethren in Christ carry the Anabaptist identity in various forms, such as adherence to adult baptism and peace and non-violence.

The founders of the Brethren in Christ had been Mennonites with direct descent to the Anabaptist migrants from Europe. Domestic or internal mission was by means of

migration westward into the mainland, thus the mission was sometimes referred to as the mission to the frontiers.

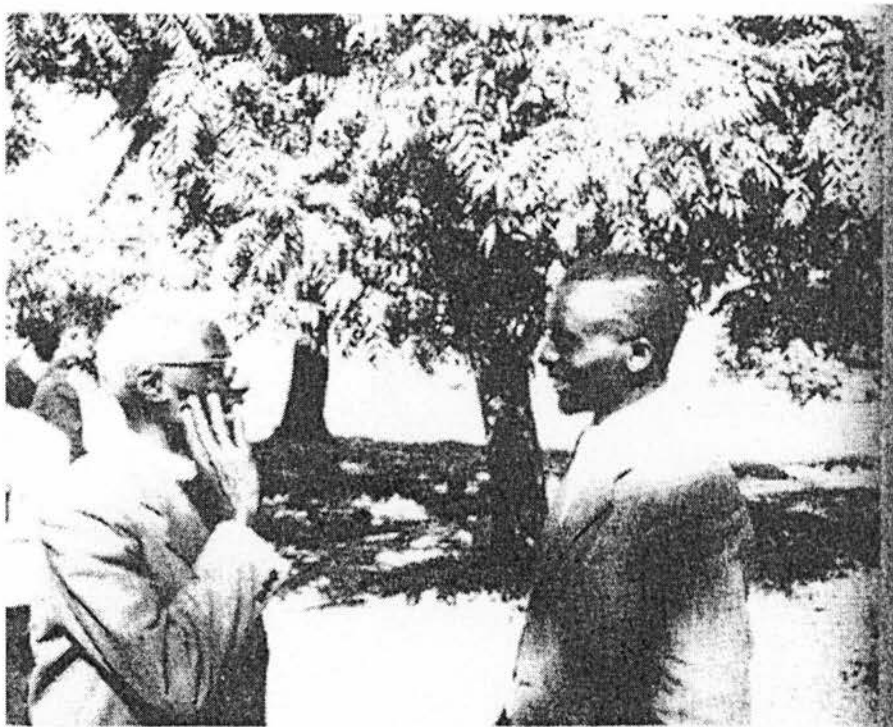
The Brethren in Christ overseas mission was inaugurated in the late 1890s, in the midst of the rise of Protestant mission efforts in America. The early appeals for mission reflected the negative western perception of Africans and the motive for mission. This western perception of Africa and the African people was a major factor in the motivation, mobilisation, and promotion of mission abroad. The Brethren religious and counter cultural milieu formed the basis for their perception of Africans, and this in turn affected the pace of indigenisation of church leadership.

This early period also reveals the Brethren in Christ's philosophy of mission leadership. While on the one hand they allowed female missionaries to lead, teach and preach to Africans, on the other hand they resisted a similar role to fellow missionaries. The role of Frances Davidson is a good illustration of this apparent ambivalence in mission leadership.

Like other western missions to Africa, the Brethren in Christ adopted the strategy of mission that considered education as a means of converting the indigenous from their old beliefs and practices and winning them to Christianity. In addition, this strategy became the basis for the development of indigenous Christian leaders. The next chapter focuses on the emergence of the early indigenous leaders.



**CHAPTER 4**  
**THE ESTABLISHING STAGE: EMERGENCE OF AFRICAN**  
**CHURCH LEADERS**  
**1925-1948**



*Plate # 4: Rev. Peter Munsaka (2nd Deacon at Sikalongo) and Samuel Muntanga (1<sup>st</sup> Full time pastor)*

"Bless the white missionaries who have brought the gospel, and bless the black missionaries who are thrusting it forward."<sup>1</sup>

#### **4.1. Introduction**

The previous chapter outlined the early missionary efforts of the Brethren in Christ to expand into Zambia's remote southern region of Macha. Frances Davidson, a female missionary was at the helm of this particular venture. In an era of male dominated mission leadership, Davidson, a single female missionary, blazed the trail of opening a new mission station at Macha. She was accompanied by another female

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<sup>1</sup> Siyayo Moyo, Quoted in Engle, *There is No Difference*. The statement by Siyayo was made at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of BIC mission to Africa in 1948.

missionary, Adda Engle, and two African men Ndlalambi Moyo and Gomo Sibanda, who were referred to as native boys.

As observed in the previous chapter, the Brethren in Christ mission practised male leadership from its inception.<sup>2</sup> This was evidenced by the composition and leadership of the Mission Board and the male leadership of the first team of missionaries to Africa.<sup>3</sup> Despite Davidson's evident leadership qualities as noted in the previous chapter, Jesse Engle, the only male member of the team was chosen to lead the first group of missionaries to Africa. However, Engle did acknowledge Davidson's leadership skills by delegating most of the administrative tasks to her.

After the death of Jesse Engle in the year 1900, and the subsequent appointment of Steigerwald, another male leader, Davidson moved from the first Matopo Mission Station in 1906 to establish the Macha Mission Station in Zambia. An apparent tension between Davidson and Steigerwald was partly the reason for Davidson's venture north of the Zambezi. She had always desired to venture into areas where indigenous Africans had not been in touch with Christian missionaries.

By 1925, two Brethren mission stations had been established in Zambia: Macha and Sikalongo Mission Stations. Davidson founded Macha Mission Station with the primary strategy of initiating an education programme with the purpose of converting the African children to Christianity. Davidson was an educationist. Myron Taylor, whose main pre-occupation was evangelism, started Sikalongo mission. Both mission leaders employed the strategy of education and evangelism. Whilst Davidson's emphasis was on education and evangelism, Taylor's work was founded on a strategy of evangelism and church planting.

For this reason, it is essential to briefly highlight Taylor's work and the founding of Sikalongo mission. It provides a natural link to the emergence of indigenous church leadership in the Brethren mission. The first indigenous church deacon was first appointed at Sikalongo station.

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<sup>2</sup> H. F Davidson, *South, South Central Africa*, 1915: 6.

<sup>3</sup> The first mission board was exclusively composed of men. This was not unusual given the fact that the denomination ordained male pastors.

## **4.2. Contextual Factors and Sikalongo Mission**

The indigenous church leaders emerged in a context of political and educational change. Politically, Northern Rhodesia passed from company rule to British colonial rule during the mid-twenties. During the same period, a historic visit from the Phelps-Stokes commission with its recommendations for educational adaptation to the African context impacted the philosophy and practice of education in Northern Rhodesia.

### **4.2.1. Socio-Political Contextual Factors**

In 1924, Northern Rhodesia experienced major political and economic change, when the colonial administration took control of the territory from the British South African Company (BSAC), making it a protectorate.<sup>4</sup> The British South African Company's rule had been essentially an instrument of economic exploitation, using Northern Rhodesia for valuable labour reserve for the copper mines in Katanga, Congo and Southern Rhodesia. The company also owned the railway transport to support the traffic carrying copper from Katanga that passed through North and South Rhodesia on its way to South Africa. At the same time, a large and vibrant mining economy was being established on the Copperbelt province.<sup>5</sup>

The railway line, which extended northwards from Kimberley, South Africa, first reached Bulawayo in 1897 and was further extended across the Zambezi in 1904. By 1910, the railway line had reached Kinshasa in the present day Democratic Republic of Congo (former Zaire). The railway line was a primary means of transporting the mineral wealth from the mines to South Africa.

The establishment of the railway line and the opening of the mine industry drew many people from the rural areas to the urban areas in search of industrial jobs. The Tonga people who were primarily agrarian were forced to join the labour migration.<sup>6</sup> Some were recruited to go to the gold mines of South Africa, while many were recruited to the copper mines within Zambia. The cause for the migration was the

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<sup>4</sup> A. Roberts *A History of Zambia*, Heinemann Educational Books, London, 1976: 182.

<sup>5</sup> A. Roberts, *A History of Zambia*, 1976: 177. See also R. Hall, *Zambia*, Pall Mall Press, London, 1965:252. However, O.T. Ranger indicates in his book, *Aspects of Central African History*, London, Heinemann 1968, he mentions that copper was shipped through Beira, on page 157. The probable reason could be that more than one route was used. Both Hall, and Roberts have done extensive and focussed history work on Zambia, and thus they are primary authorities on the information about Zambia.

<sup>6</sup> The cause for the migration was the need to raise money to pay taxes as indicated on 1976: 118.

need to raise money to pay taxes, as indicated by the role of chiefs in collecting taxes.

Tonga traditional leadership came under the control of the British South African Company, particularly through the rule that formally organised some chieftainships for the purpose of collecting tax from villagers. The company also controlled the migration of indigenous people. Traditional leaders were limited in their execution of authority and power. European domination in the governance of the Tonga was evident in the demand on traditional leadership to submit and report to the company authorities.

With the introduction of indirect rule in rural areas, traditional chiefs managed tribal areas under the watchful eye of the company. Since the BSAC appointed some of the traditional leaders, headmen became the mouthpieces of the ruling government. This system of apparent self-government destabilised traditional rule. Meebelo concluded that the purpose for the introduction of 'indirect rule' was to subdue the Africans. They hoped that indirect rule would make Africans contented. In this way, chiefs would be preoccupied with their own traditional and cultural affairs. Ultimately, the company hoped that there would be no place for political agitation.<sup>7</sup>

Under the company's socio-economic and political domination, the education sector was under-funded. The company's priority was the advancement of mineral profits from the copper mines of the Copperbelt region during this early period of the 1920s.

#### **4.2.2. Educational Contextual Factor**

Another significant development of the mid 1920s was the influence and impact of the Phelps-Stokes commission on African education. This was the Commission invited in by the Northern Rhodesia's Conference of Missionary Societies and the colonial government. They decided to invite the trustees of the Phelps-Stokes Fund to undertake a major responsibility for carrying out an educational survey in East and Central Africa. In November 1923, the trustees of the Fund authorised the new commission and made a handsome contribution to its cost.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> H. S Meebelo, *Reaction to Colonialism*, Manchester University Press, London, 1971:189.

<sup>8</sup> Members appointed to the commission included the following: Dr. James Aggrey a distinguished educationist from Ghana; Dr. J. H Dillard, from USA, President of the Jeanes Fund; Dr. H. L Shantz, from USA, Botanist and Agriculturist; Rev. G. Williams, Educational Secretary of the Church

The Phelps-Stokes Fund had been set up in New York under the will of Miss Caroline Phelps-Stokes to further 'the education of Africans and Negroes in the United States'. They sent two commissions to West, South East, and Central Africa.

The schools belonging to the Brethren in Christ were among the selected few mission schools that were visited by the Phelps-Stokes Commission in 1924, despite the fact that the Brethren in Christ were among the smaller Protestant missions.<sup>9</sup> However, there is little reference to the impact and effect of the Phelps-Stokes commission on the work of the Brethren in Christ from the Mission's archives. Since the Brethren in Christ were members of the Conference of Missionary Societies of Northern Rhodesia, which represented both Protestant and Catholic Missions that met with the Commission, it is probable that the Mission incorporated some of the Commission's propositions.<sup>10</sup>

The Stokes Commission's emphasis on adaptation of education to African ways of life had implications for the emergence of indigenous church leaders. By adaptation, the Commission meant a type of education set to the conditions and needs of the society. The Commission had hoped that such an approach would raise the standard of life of the village community. In reality, there was a discrepancy between the education offered to the western community and that made available to the indigenous people.

Several authors have observed that this adaptation of education in Africa only served the interests of the settlers, who remained in control of both the political and economic life of the country.<sup>11</sup> In particular, Thompson in his treatment of Donald Fraser as a mission strategist makes candid observations regarding the role of mission education in colonial Africa. He concurs with Kenneth King in his argument

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Missionary Society; Major Hans Vischer, Secretary of the Colonial Office Advisory Committee on Native Education in Tropical Africa; C. T. Loram of South Africa; James Dougall from Scotland, and Dr. Thomas Jesse Jones, the Chairman of the commission, originally born in Wales and later educated in the United States of America.

<sup>9</sup> T. J. Jones, *Education in East Africa*, Edinburgh House Press, London, p. 263. See also Appendix 1, Map: Africa Itinerary of the Africa Education Commissions Phelps-Stokes Fund.

<sup>10</sup> T. J. Jones, *Education in East Africa*, p. 265.

<sup>11</sup> B. P. Carmody, *Conversion and Jesuit Schooling in Zambia*, 1992, L. J. Lewis, *Phelps-Stokes Reports in Education in Africa*, 1962, J. Saxby, *The Politics of Education in Zambia*, PhD Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1980.



that the Phelps-Stokes Commission's propositions only served to keep the African in a lower status and prepared him for supervised roles of work such as clerical work in colonial offices. He further argues that the missionaries were taken in by Phelps-Stokes Commission's philosophy and were unaware of its racist undertones.<sup>12</sup> Thus, in relation to the emergence of indigenous leadership, Africans were not given the type of education that would prepare them for significant leadership responsibilities. Instead, most Africans received what was referred to as the education of the masses, which entailed rudimentary lessons, focussed on civic and agricultural skills.

This affected the emergence of indigenous church leaders. The prevailing practices of relegating Africans to working on the land and lower level clerical jobs in the government meant that Africans would only serve as assistants to western leaders, including missionaries. The Africans deliberately were not prepared for the positions of leadership that the missionaries had reached in the initial stages of their work. It can therefore be argued that the form and pace of education influenced the emergence of Christian church leaders among the Tonga people.

Education was largely in the hands of various missionary organisations. However, mission agencies had their own challenges. The mission focus on Christian conversions affected further development of education. Most mission organisations concentrated on primary education. In addition, lack of substantial funding for mission education hindered further progress. For example, the country's first Junior Secondary School for African boys was established only in 1939 at Munali, in Lusaka.<sup>13</sup>

The advancement of indigenous people to any level of political or religious leadership was largely related to the level of education. Due to the overall low levels of education open to Africans, however, final year primary school students assumed teaching responsibilities without formal teacher training experience. These students were mainly Standard Five and Six graduates. Lack of general investment in education meant that there were few educated Africans among most of the

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<sup>12</sup> T. J Thompson, *Christianity in Northern Malawi*, E. J Brill, New York, 1995: 240, 244. For detailed discussion on the subject, see also K. King, *Pan-Africanism and Education: A Study of Race Philanthropy and Education in the Southern States of America and East Africa*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.

<sup>13</sup> A. Roberts, *A History of Zambia*, 1971: 194.



indigenous people and the Tonga people in particular. This phenomenon had implications for the emergence of African church leaders. There were few educated Africans, who could read and write, and later teach fellow Africans. The missionary leaders at Sikalongo played a significant role in the emergence of indigenous Church leaders.

#### **4.3. Initial Mission Leadership and Sikalongo Mission**

Myron Taylor was the founding leader at Sikalongo mission. He was born on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1873 in Imlay City, Michigan. His academic career took him up to 8<sup>th</sup> grade only. He grew up in a religious family and was baptised in 1891 at 18 years of age.<sup>14</sup> In 1899, Taylor resolved to obey God's call to go into Christian missions in Africa. It was not until the autumn (fall) of 1905 that Taylor eventually closed his sawmill business to prepare for mission service.

The Foreign Mission Board (FMB) was responsible for accepting and sending missionaries to Africa. Taylor was accepted and commissioned for missionary service to Africa in October 1906, about the same time as the establishment of the Macha mission in Zambia. However, the FMB did not have sufficient funding to send missionaries to Africa at the time of Taylor's acceptance for service. Taylor's family facilitated his financial support for his passage to the mission field.<sup>15</sup> Taylor departed for Africa after the denomination's General Conference of 1907, held at Messiah Home in Pennsylvania.<sup>16</sup>

Taylor was the first male western missionary to join the Macha Mission Station. He arrived at Macha mission in November 1907. A year earlier the in 1906, the two female missionaries Davidson and Engle had travelled with two African helpers to establish Macha Mission Station. His arrival was appreciated, given the demand by the colonial government for the presence of 'white males' on the mission station. Unlike Davidson and Engle, Taylor was not a secular educationist. His primary mission objective and gift was for evangelism. He regularly visited the surrounding villages around the mission. Eventually, Taylor was able to speak the Tonga

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<sup>14</sup> *Evangelical Visitor*, 1<sup>st</sup> November, 1907, XXI, No. 21: 3, 10.

<sup>15</sup> Sider, E. M and Vannatter, A, *Fruit from Words and Sands*, Evangel Press, 1978: 51- 52.

<sup>16</sup> Mission Report, *Evangelical Visitor*, July 1, 1907, XXI, No. 13: 3.

language fluently. Equipped with the knowledge and articulation of the local language, Taylor's teaching and preaching abilities were greatly enhanced.<sup>17</sup>

Taylor's pursuit of village evangelism later became a source of leadership tension with Davidson. Taylor's frequent excursions away from the station meant that he did not participate in much of the station work, contrary to Davidson's expectations. It is probable that Davidson perceived Taylor's frequent absence from the station as undermining her authority and leadership. The apparent tension between Davidson and Taylor was perhaps to be expected. It has already been noted that this type of leadership tension occurred in her previous working relationships with other male Brethren in Christ missionaries.

In 1909, Taylor married Adda Engle, one of the two female missionaries serving at Macha. Engle was a missionary teacher. The two were to complement each other in their mission service of teaching and evangelism. Taylor's main leadership influence was through religious teaching and preaching. However, he was also known for his hunting prowess. His liking for hunting would later lead him to his death when he was attacked by a lion.

After their marriage, the couple made their intentions known to establish a new mission station. Following the channels for authorisation of new mission projects, Taylor applied to the Foreign Mission Board, but he was informed that the mission did not have sufficient funds for opening a new mission station.<sup>18</sup> However, during his next mission furlough, Taylor managed to raise the needed funds to start the new mission station.

Upon return from furlough, the Taylors made preparations to relocate to a new area. Taylor's previous village visitations helped in the search for a new station. The process of establishing a new station involved consulting both traditional and government leaders. According to George Hansumo, currently a lecturer at Sikalongo Bible School, they first attempted to settle in Chief Singani's area, but the chief was not agreeable to the idea of them setting up a mission station in his

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<sup>17</sup> Sider, E. M, *Nine Portraits, Brethren in Christ Biographical Sketches*, Evangel Press, Indiana, 1978: 190.

<sup>18</sup> Engle, Climenhaga, and Buckwalter, *There is No Difference*, 1950: 131.

territory.<sup>19</sup> After making their unsuccessful request, they turned to Chief Sikalongo for permission to set up a mission station. Chief Sikalongo was more amiable and allowed the missionaries to establish a station. For this reason, the mission was named 'Sikalongo Mission', after the local chief's name. Traditional rulers played a significant role in the formation or founding of mission work. Those who allowed the establishment of mission stations later benefited from the introduction of western education. However, with the coming of western educational influence came the western impact on traditional African values. In particular, traditional education was superseded by western forms of education. No longer did the elders of the home or village have sole responsibility for instructing the children.

Another significant factor in the process of founding Sikalongo Mission was the contact with the colonial officials. Taylor had to formally apply for a land grant.<sup>20</sup> The first District Commissioner that Taylor contacted was sympathetic to the missionary cause. However, this particular District Commissioner had to go on furlough back to England. A new District Commissioner, Gosling, replaced him. He was hostile to Taylor's request for a land grant. Gosling refused to grant land for a mission station. He claimed that he had experienced problems with similar mission related groups while serving in the north-eastern part of the territory during the First World War.<sup>21</sup>

While waiting for further intervention regarding the request for a land grant, Taylor was given some land temporarily. Taylor set up a temporary shelter that was used as a home and base for mission work.<sup>22</sup>

Later, Gosling was recalled to England. The former District Commissioner, who was more congenial to mission work, returned to the Choma office. Taylor's application was reconsidered and accepted. Upon receiving confirmation of the land grant, construction of buildings at the mission station commenced.

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<sup>19</sup> George Hansumo, Lecturer, Sikalongo Bible Institute, *Interview*, Sikalongo, July, 2001.

<sup>20</sup> Mission Report, *Evangelical Visitor*, August 27, 1917, XXXI, No. 16: 28-30.

<sup>21</sup> Engle, Climenhaga, and Buckwalter, *There is No Difference* 1950: 133.

<sup>22</sup> Mission Report, *Evangelical Visitor*, XXXII, no. 5, March 11, 1918: 4 -5.

Sikalongo Mission was officially opened in 1921.<sup>23</sup> The mission began with a church building followed by a night school programme for African children. The church group initially met under a tree. In the subsequent year the boys' school was built, and the worship services could be held in the same building. These early services regularly attracted about seventy Africans on Sundays. The model of a church and school operating alongside each other was put in place early on in the establishment of the Sikalongo Mission.

Subsequently, another missionary, Cecil Cullen, arrived in 1931. He assumed most of the administrative responsibilities at the mission station. The coming of Cullen to Sikalongo enabled Taylor to continue with his priority of evangelising the surrounding villages. It was convenient for Cullen to take up mission leadership at Sikalongo Mission as male missionary leadership continued at this early stage in the establishment of the Sikalongo Mission.

In August 1931, there was a famine in the Sikalongo area. The famine brought about an unusual collaboration between the British Colonial Office and the mission. The government organised Relief Food Camps near the mission. Taylor had the permission to preach to the many people coming to the camps to get relief food, including some African government workers who were constructing a road in the area. The readiness and easy access to the people in the camp compelled Taylor to invite three African evangelists to assist in the preaching to the people in the camp. Effectively, these were early African evangelists. It was estimated that about five thousand people heard the gospel from the evangelists.<sup>24</sup>

News of a wounded lion, which was dangerous and was roaming the outskirts of the food camp, was reported in September 1931. The lion had escaped from an animal trap and Taylor, who was known for his hunting prowess, volunteered to track down the lion and kill it. He set out with some five Africans from the roadwork crew of the camp with a borrowed rifle.<sup>25</sup> After a long search, later that afternoon they located the wounded lion in a small thicket. After two failed attempts to shoot the lion, Taylor's third bullet jammed, and the lion attacked him crushing one of his legs and

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<sup>23</sup> Engle, Buckwalter, Climenhaga, *There is No Difference* 1950: 133.

<sup>24</sup> Mission Report, *Evangelical Visitor*, October 26, 1931, XLIV, No. 21: 348-9.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

arm in the process. The African helpers, who had earlier fled into some nearby trees, returned to the scene and carried Taylor back to the camp. As his injuries needed extensive surgery, a surgeon from Livingstone was informed and arrived the next day. However, the surgeon did not succeed in saving Taylor's life. He died on 16<sup>th</sup> September 1931.<sup>26</sup>

After Taylor's death, Cullen took over the responsibilities of the Sikalongo Mission until 1938. Subsequent mission leaders served for shorter periods. Not much information is available in the Brethren in Christ historical archives. Most significantly, this period saw the emergence of indigenous church leaders and for this reason, emphasis in this chapter moves to focus on the emergence of indigenous church leaders of the time.

The emerging Tonga church leaders worked alongside western missionary leaders. The most notable and formally recognised leaders of the church were the deacons, evangelists, and teacher-pastors. It is notable that this phenomenon of the initial emergence of indigenous church leaders occurred in the colonial period. Certain factors connected with this period had significant influence on the life and work of the Brethren in Christ mission work and these need to be examined.

#### **4.4. Advent of Indigenous Church Leaders among the Tonga People**

Similarly, the low levels of education had a significant bearing on the emergence of indigenous church leaders. The earliest leadership roles, such as that of deacon, did not require much education. As the educational levels improved, later leadership roles such as those of evangelist, and teacher-pastor, which required a greater facility in reading and writing, emerged. The chronological development stages of indigenous church leaders also reflected the level and amount of authority and influence of particular leadership roles.

##### **4.4.1. Advent of Deacons as Church Leaders**

The earliest African church leaders were deacons and evangelists. The African deacons were elected by the local church with the help of the missionary in charge of the station. They usually served five-year terms of office.<sup>27</sup> There was no indication

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<sup>26</sup> Engle, Climenhaga, and Buckwalter, *There is No Difference*, 1950: 136.

<sup>27</sup> E. S. Eyer, *Macha Mission Report*, 1943: 86.

of specific educational qualifications required for this church leadership role. This was due to the fact that deacons served as assistants to the missionaries. Their responsibilities included interpretation, visitation of the church members, and routine record keeping. Therefore, the general low levels of education at the time did not seem to affect the selection of deacons. The primary duties of the deacon included assisting the missionary pastor and the District Superintendent in both the spiritual and administrative functions of the church.<sup>28</sup>

The earliest church leaders were appointed in Zimbabwe. It was here that the first Brethren in Christ mission station had been established. The first deacons were elected to office in Zimbabwe in 1922. It was not until six years later, in 1928, that the first deacon was appointed at Sikalongo in Zambia. He was known as Deacon Chikaile.<sup>29</sup> At Macha Mission, Mwaalu Mweetwa was elected to the office of a deacon in 1936. Like Chikaile of Sikalongo Mission, Mwaalu served in various roles under the leadership of the missionaries before he was recognised as a leader among his own people.<sup>30</sup> One outstanding feature in Mweetwa's life and ministry was his involvement in the translation of the Bible into the Tonga language.<sup>31</sup>

It is probable that deacons, having been elected by fellow Africans must have been natural leaders among their own people in addition to demonstrating qualities of spirituality. In a society that attached great value to age, deacons were therefore older men. As such, they were deemed men of mature judgement. For example, Deacon Peter Munsaka who later succeeded Deacon Chikaile and later served two terms of office in the 1940s, was much older than some of the missionaries he worked under.<sup>32</sup> It is worth noting that in this earlier period, although there was little conscious attempt by missionaries to integrate traditional African leadership values with their own western expectations of leadership.

#### 4.4.1.1. *The Position of Deacons*

The position of a deacon was a voluntary one. There is no indication from either archival sources or interviews that it was a paid position. Deacons, according to

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<sup>28</sup> See Manual of Doctrine and Government of the Brethren in Christ, Part 3, Article 1

<sup>29</sup> Engle, *There is No Difference*, 1950: 134.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 1950: 198.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 1950: 197.

<sup>32</sup> E. Musser, *Personal Interview*, September, 1999.



Engle's description of Munsaka, also held other jobs. Speaking of deacons, she wrote:

A few years later he became station foreman at Sikalongo, readily accepting responsibilities, which lightened the superintendent's load. In 1942, he was first elected to the [office of deacon], five years later was re-elected, and continues faithful in his duties both in the station and the church. A man with a genial spirit and a friendly smile, he quickly wins his way into a visitor's heart.<sup>33</sup>

In the absence of an elder in the BIC church structure, it could be presumed that the deacon's role included pastoral care. The 1948 mission report described the deacon's spiritual oversight as including the conducting of prayer meetings, giving testimonies, and teaching and preaching.<sup>34</sup>

Although, Macha Mission was established 13 years earlier than Sikalongo Mission, the first Zambian deacon in the Brethren in Christ came from Sikalongo mission. Taylor's focus on evangelism and church planting was a possible factor in being selected as the first deacon. In contrast, at Macha, Davidson focussed on education and evangelism with emphasis on occasional village visitation. It is probable that Davidson saw more teachers emerge in her area while Taylor facilitated the emergence of the earliest church leaders.

The position of deacon in the Brethren in Christ seems to have been occupied by the local Zambian Christians. Though the church structure was borrowed from north America, there is no record of there ever having been any western missionary deacons in the Brethren in Christ in Zambia. The position of a deacon reserved to Africans was always subordinate to the missionary or pastor in the local church leadership structure. At this initial church planting stage of the Brethren in Christ history, deacons had been accorded the helper role.

#### *4.4.1.2. The Role of Deacons*

The role of deacon was a link between the missionaries and the local church members. These Tonga men, who were mostly older than most missionaries, seemed to know and understand their own people better than the foreign missionaries.

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<sup>33</sup> Engle, *There is No Difference*, 1950: 189.

<sup>34</sup> D. Climenhaga, Sikalongo Mission, General Report, 1948: 57.

Therefore, they were able to relate to fellow Africans more closely than the missionaries were. With the advantage of affinity to African society, the elderly men were perceived as mature people both in traditional values and spiritual knowledge. According to Shamapani, deacons were considered on the basis of age and spiritual maturity, rather than educational levels.<sup>35</sup>

The deacon's role was to nurture converts and assist the leading missionary at particular stations. As mission work expanded to regions beyond initial mission stations, there was need for itinerant workers who served in remote villages. These itinerant workers were known as evangelists. In the initial stages, the evangelists accompanied the missionaries ordinarily as interpreters, a good example being men who worked with Taylor during the drought in 1930. These two roles of deacon and evangelist must therefore have overlapped in the development of indigenous church leadership in the Brethren in Christ Mission.

#### **4.4.2. Advent of Evangelists as Church Leaders**

The position of evangelist was another early African church leadership role among the Tonga people. Evangelists played an important role in implementing the missionary's evangelisation strategy for the church. These evangelists were primarily roving preachers. They were usually sent by missionaries as bearers of the gospel to villages surrounding the mission station and other remote areas. Most of the evangelists were male members of the church, with only a few female evangelists. A considerable number of these women were wives of the evangelists serving in partnership with their husbands.

The Brethren in Christ mission began training African evangelists in 1917. Steigerwald's report of 1917 on the Evangelists' Training School reflects the prevailing missionary attitudes and strategy of evangelisation.

"It is now sixteen months since we came to Matopo to open up and conduct a training school for teachers and evangelists. The first is now past. It was a year of beginnings and experiments; a year of trying and planning. A very important year indeed, because standards would need to be raised and

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<sup>35</sup> E. Shamapani (Bishop 1989-2002), *Personal Interview*, August, 1999.

precedents made upon which the future success or failure of the school would, to a large extent, depend.<sup>36</sup>

One thing is certain; we are not dealing with the same raw, ignorant native of ten or fifteen years ago. We have before us a class of young men, who are learning to think for themselves. Their minds are beginning to expand and to burst the shell that bound them for centuries. But the time of overlapping between barbarism and civilisation is a trying one to any people and the future doubtless has many difficulties in store for them. Some of them as regards knowledge of the word even now would put to shame many of their brethren and sisters of fairer hue.<sup>37</sup>

Missionary attitudes towards the indigenous Christians and Tonga people in general varied among the Brethren in Christ missionaries. Steigerwald's report offers a much positive affirmation of African abilities in the process of training evangelists. Some evangelists were informally trained by apprenticeship beginning as interpreters to the missionaries.<sup>38</sup> It is worth noting the ambivalent sentiments in the report regarding the overlapping time between what is referred to as barbarism and civilisation. Despite the missionary's struggle with his perception of Africans regarding issues of civilisation, the attempt was still made to equip Africans for the task of evangelism.

Other evangelists were trained alongside primary school teachers. In January 1918, the third term of teacher-evangelists had begun.<sup>39</sup> By this period, the work of missionaries was very closely related to education. Most missionaries embraced the philosophy that the future of the church in Africa depended upon the preparation of African teachers as evangelists and educators.<sup>40</sup>

#### 4.4.2.1. *The Position and Role of Evangelists*

Evangelists were the primary channels for accomplishing the basic objectives of missions as perceived by the missionaries, namely education and evangelism. The aim of training evangelists was to fulfil the task of bringing Christian salvation to the

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<sup>36</sup> H. P. Steigerwald, *Report of Evangelists' Training School*, 1917: 1.

<sup>37</sup> H. P. Steigerwald, *Report of Evangelists' Training School*, 1917: 19.

<sup>38</sup> Such type of training is similar to that of traditional Tonga training of leaders as noted on pages 28 and 35.

<sup>39</sup> H. J. Frey, *Daily Attendance Record*, 1916-21.

<sup>40</sup> African Missionary Conference *Minutes*, Article, II, 1915.

Tonga people, who were regarded by the Brethren missionaries at the time as pagan. The testimony of Dorothy Hershey, a Brethren in Christ missionary on furlough in 1948, made a contrast between the evangelised and the unevangelised fields. She said, "Salvation raises the standards of living of the Africans. One of the greatest hindrances to evangelisation is illiteracy."<sup>41</sup> It can be deduced from this statement that the missionaries' negative perception of the Africans as pagans reinforced the early mission strategy of establishing schools as means of evangelising the non-believing Tonga people. This primary purpose of the Brethren in Christ missionary strategy was well echoed by the then mission superintendent, Brubaker, in his report to the Foreign Mission Board:

"The outstanding need of Africa is that its people may be brought into a vital relationship with Christ as Saviour and Lord. Measured by the tremendous needs of the great mass of unsaved pagans, the effort of the eleven men designated as evangelists by the Brethren in Christ seems pitifully small.

In addition to the work at the outstations, several evangelists served the mission station congregations. Another evangelist was added to the permanent list in Northern Rhodesia. His name is Kalaluka. He had taught at an outstation some years ago.<sup>42</sup>

The evangelists accomplished their task through weekly preaching in the outstation preaching posts. In some cases, preaching was conducted in local churches where a sizeable group of local converts to the Christian faith gathered regularly. However, due to the nature of the work of evangelists, most of the preaching posts lacked personnel to nurture the newly converted Tonga people. Brubaker's report of 1947 showed a positive appreciation of the contribution made by 'the African staff', while lamenting that there were too few of them:

The African staff on the whole gave faithful service. The ministers, deacons, and evangelists continue to be used of God. We wish to record our appreciation of those faithful men in charge of preaching posts who travel many miles each Sunday to proclaim the [good] news. There is growing lack on the other hand of suitable men to carry the spiritual part of the work.<sup>43</sup>

Unlike the position of deacon, which was exclusively occupied by Africans, both Africans and Brethren in Christ missionaries carried out the role of evangelists. This

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<sup>41</sup> C. Urlery, *Missionary Conference*, Memorial Holiness Camp, West Milton, Ohio, June 13, 1948.

<sup>42</sup> H. H. Brubaker, *FMB Report on Evangelistic Work*, 1947: 68.

<sup>43</sup> H. H. Brubaker, *Africa Report to the FMB*, 1947: 65.

was demonstrated by services in which both Tonga and missionary evangelists participated. However, it must be pointed out that the position of Evangelist was subservient to that of a missionary and only occupied by Africans.

Two Evangelistic services were held during the year. The first one was held by Rev. Arthur Climenhaga from Wanezi Out-Schools, Southern Rhodesia; the other was held by Evangelist Mizinga from Macha Mission. Many people came from the Zambezi valley, some dirty, some with colourful clothing, bright red loin cloths and brightly coloured beads, but all needing a saviour. Each Thursday morning service is held with them.<sup>44</sup>

It was common practice during this period for African evangelists from Zimbabwe to be invited to preach in Zambia. During the pre-independence era, the Brethren in Christ mission work in Central Africa was overseen by a mission superintendent based in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Evangelistic assignments were orchestrated from the Bulawayo central office.<sup>45</sup> Both Winger's Macha evangelistic report and Hershey's Sikalongo annual report demonstrate Zimbabwean evangelists' involvement in Zambia.

The seed has been sown by our two Evangelists as well as Mpofu from Southern Rhodesia. Mpofu's report was taken to Brother Brubaker, but Mizinga and Mafula reported quite good interest at most places. In all, there were about 628 who stayed for prayer, doubtless some of these were repeaters, and many realise little of what they are doing, but God's promise is that His word will not return [to] Him void, and we can rest on this.<sup>46</sup>

The two evangelistic meetings were held during the year. We appreciated Fundazi Mpofu, from Southern Rhodesia, and especially rejoiced when a heathen man stood out and came to Christ.<sup>47</sup>

The language barrier faced by foreign speaking evangelists was overcome by the use of interpreters. Both European and Zimbabwean evangelists were accompanied by interpreters in the travelling preaching circuits. However, it is interesting to note that Zimbabwean evangelists working in Zambia did not share the same status with western evangelists. This tendency of not to recognising Africans as missionaries

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<sup>44</sup> D. Climenhaga, *Sikalongo Evangelistic Report*, 1947.

<sup>45</sup> F. H Davidson, *South, South Central Africa*, 1915: 320. Early establishment of the Macha Mission was monitored and facilitated from the Bulawayo office of the Mission Superintendent, Steigerwald.

<sup>46</sup> B. E. Winger, *Macha District Evangelistic Report*, 1946: 46.

<sup>47</sup> J. E. Hershey, *Sikalongo Mission Annual Report*, 1946: 47.

also occurred when Zambians crossed to Zimbabwe for preaching and teaching assignments.

The evangelistic meetings, at which both the foreign and local evangelists preached, were also known as 'revival services'. Most of the services were held in outstation schools and villages. The schools also provided venues for regular church services organised by male teachers. The evangelistic focus on out-schools illustrate the continued link between evangelisation and education. A report by Climenhaga demonstrates the impact Tonga evangelists were having.

Revival services were held at each school by Samuel Muunda, our Evangelist. Also many villages surrounding the schools were visited. During the year there were 18 people baptised from the out-schools.

Again we ask you to continue praying for these out-school teachers as many of them have hard places to fill. We pray that they may be true examples to their own people, lifting them up and pointing them to Christ.<sup>48</sup>

In the 1940s, the mission trend linking evangelisation to education was common among various missionary organisations. For example, Ipenburg, in his historical narrative of the development of Lubwa Mission, underscores the adherence to the same strategy of mission work practised by the Scottish missionaries in Northern Province.<sup>49</sup> Children enrolled in the various mission schools were a primary target group for the Brethren in Christ Mission.

Revival services were held at each school, with Evangelists Mafula, and Jamu, from Macha. Expressions of appreciation for their messages were heard. Quite a number of children repented. We pray that they may remain true to their Master. There [are] such a large percentage of [casualties] among the young professing Christians. For many of them, heathen wicked parents and adults constitute their daily environment.<sup>50</sup>

Throughout the early period of expansion of the mission work to out-schools and villages, African evangelists performed the task with significant influence on both fellow indigenous Christians and missionaries. The immediate impact of evangelistic work was evidenced by the positive response of indigenous Africans who became

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<sup>48</sup> R. H Mann, *Sikalongo Mission and Outschool Report*, 1942: 28.

<sup>49</sup> A. Ipenburg, *'All Good Men'*, Peter Lang, NewYork, 1992: 160.

<sup>50</sup> D. Climenhaga, *Sikalongo Outstation Report*, 1948: 57.



converted. This phenomenon was expressed through people's request for prayer and a number of baptisms.

The evangelist's primary sphere of influence was nevertheless among school children, who were normally a captive audience since attendance at religious services was made compulsory by the missionaries.

The outstation schools also have large and increasing enrolments. There were over 7800 pupils enrolled in our schools during the year. This is at once a heavy task and a splendid opportunity. To have access to such a large group of impressionable youth presents us with the greatest field for missionary work imaginable. *We offer no apology that our aim is to win each one for Christ.* <sup>51</sup> There were 83 outstations open during the year. At each of these places regular church services are held and school sessions are held each day of the year.<sup>52</sup>

Through the work with children, the evangelists' influence could spread out to adults, including senior villagers such as headmen:

The headman of the next village was a former schoolboy at Sikalongo, James Mudenda. He had an eye infection, so he heard our message from the hut. The rest gathered just outside. We had our largest crowd at this village and most of them were children. Andrea spoke here using the parable of the ten virgins as the theme of his thoughts. Here the first wife of the headman asked for prayer, also several of the children.

After the service, we gave the children some Sunday school cards that had been sent from home to Sr. Graybill. The children were very interested in them and also the adults. They finally got the courage to ask if they could have some too. They have so little in the line of pictures, but they do not last long on the walls of their huts, as they are not protected from the ants.<sup>53</sup>

Such progress of evangelistic work was not without its own challenges. In particular evangelists faced the challenge of understanding the response of Africans to the preaching of the gospel..

In two revival services this year, one with Evangelist Kalaluka and the other with Evangelist Mizinga, both from Macha there were souls who remained for prayer. Some confessions gave evidence of shallow thinking and non-comprehension of the fundamentals of salvation. Other confessions gave

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<sup>51</sup> *Italics are mine for emphasis on policy and philosophy of ministry*

<sup>52</sup> H. H Brubaker, General Mission Superintendent, Africa General Report, 1943: 74.

<sup>53</sup> R. Lenhart, Village Visitation, *Evangelical Visitor*, July 11, 1949: 230.

evidence of a sincere heart desire to follow Christ wherever he leads. We pray for the former that the eyes of their understanding might be opened. We pray for the latter that they might be kept, and rejoice for them as we see their Christian growth.<sup>54</sup>

One would presume that the indigenous evangelists would have been better placed than the missionaries to counsel the new believers emerging from non-believing families. Their understanding of the cultural and traditional demands of Tonga society was fundamental in assisting new converts transitioning through the new religious changes from African traditional religions to Christianity.

#### 4.4.2.2. *Models of Evangelists*

Most Brethren in Christ evangelists were male Tonga Christians. However, the career of a female evangelist, Sityokupi Sibanda, reveals that the mission did have a few female evangelists. Although not formally recognised and trained, Sibanda's contribution was nonetheless significant.

Many would have been glad to hear more of evangelist Moyo's stories, he gave way to Sitshokupi Sibanda, who told of her conversion and call to Christian work and her joy in the work she is doing amongst the women. Her concern was that young people today might respond to the call to serve Christ and make Him known amongst the dark and needy.<sup>55</sup>

It was common during this era of Brethren in Christ mission development for indigenous Christian women to assist in various ways including interpretation. Sitshokupi Sibanda's testimony and further desire to see more young people involved in evangelistic efforts were unusual for her time in the history of the mission. However, there were other mission societies in the same period, which did not at an early stage have women in roles such as that of an evangelist. This is well illustrated in Ipenburg's testimony regarding the absence of female evangelists in mission work at Lubwa Mission.<sup>56</sup> It is probable that at the time when Brethren in Christ focussed on training men for evangelistic work, the rise of women such as Sytyokupi emerged by default rather than plan. The emphasis on one's 'call' to mission work could have contributed to the possibility of the emergence of female Christian work and evangelistic work in particular. A personal claim of God's 'call' to mission was

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<sup>54</sup> D. Climenhaga, *Sikalongo Mission, General Report*, 1948: 57.

<sup>55</sup> With The Church of Rhodesia in Their Jubilee, *Evangelical Visitor*, August 23, 1948: 10.

<sup>56</sup> Ipenburg, *'All Good Men'*, 1992: 160.

readily accepted by the Brethren in Christ Mission and Church, despite the subjective nature. Challenging one's 'call' was tantamount to challenging God's leading of a particular individual.

Another unusual example of evangelists, present at this time of mission development, was the advent of blind evangelists. In the absence of Braille training, the blind evangelists received informal training through the missionaries, and in some cases from their spouses. Most of the evangelists other than the traditionally preferred male-trained ones must have justified their service in the mission by a claim to a special 'call' to the task. Brubaker's report from Wanezi mission illustrates the cases of blind evangelists, Kumalo, and Ndimwa.

The wife of the blind evangelist has also been used of God to win souls. She became a Christian quite young and a Christian young man wanted to marry her. Her father could not consent as he was of the lower clan. Consequently, she married Kumalo who was not a Christian. She also had backslid at the time. Later she repented and begun to pray and read the Sunday school lessons to her husband who had become blind. She was faithful in witnessing and her husband repented. Now he spends much of his time in evangelistic work, winning others from sin and paganism.<sup>57</sup>

Mlobeki Moyo was in Northern Rhodesia for several months. Mdimwa was added to the list of regular evangelists. He is blind. He had felt the call to this work for years. He gives inspiring messages and does good work. We now have two men serving as evangelists. While they are handicapped in getting about their work seems to be as good as that of the other men.<sup>58</sup>

The emergence of blind evangelists added an unusual dimension to church leadership influence. The blind evangelists did not emerge through traditional training classes. They were a result of informal apprenticeship. The case of blind evangelist Kumalo also highlights the strategic and indispensable role of female Christians in evangelistic efforts. Brubaker's insightful observation of comparable effectiveness of blind evangelists depicts indigenous initiative in the development of Christian leadership. It also shows that in this case, the development of indigenous Christian leadership was not solely dependent on missionary efforts.

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<sup>57</sup> Wanezi Mission Report, *Evangelical Visitor*, October 17, 1949: 34.

<sup>58</sup> H. H. Brubaker, (General Mission Superintendent) *Report of Evangelistic Work*, 1943: 79.

Indigenous evangelists were well rooted in the traditional models of communication while preaching a new-found faith. Winger's report on the style of evangelistic preaching demonstrates the evangelists' ability to integrate biblical truth with an African worldview. The indigenous evangelists' understanding and familiarity with their own way of life also enabled them to address specific areas of need, such as the African home, with clarity and boldness.

Today in members meeting, we also had short reports from Mizinga, and Kalaluka; the two evangelists who live here have been in evangelistic work in the Sikalongo area. Their reports to the home church were very encouraging. They meet lots of hard things but praise the Lord; He can see them through. Kalaluka's statement as to how they preached was very interesting. He said, "We spread the gospel like the *mandebele* plant. We mix all the different kinds of seeds together and broadcast. Some falls on good ground, some on stony soil, some in thorns, but we keep on broadcasting, and some will bring forth fruit."<sup>59</sup>

Today marked the closing of the evangelistic meetings in Northern Rhodesia for the year 1947. Apuleni was our evangelist here at Macha. He was amongst the earliest to repent and has stood true since. He shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God, crying out against the evils of the day in no uncertain terms - even to the point of almost seeming to upset some. Few there are who irrespective of others are willing to cry out.

Last Sunday he gave a very strong sermon on the Christian home, crying out against many evils of the African home. Sad to say, the African Christian home is in many ways bound by superstition which is enmity against Godliness.<sup>60</sup>

Indigenous evangelists in the Brethren in Christ mission were church leaders. Their leadership influence was primarily through the communication of Christian knowledge. They were leading men of the mission strategy to introduce the Christian faith to Tonga villagers. Evangelists were equipped for their work both formally and informally. The unusual emergence of both female and blind evangelists testifies to the initiative of indigenous Christians in assuming leadership roles in the mission.

Though unplanned by missionaries, the presence of both blind and female evangelists has been well acknowledged in the annals of Brethren mission history. While formally and informally trained personnel assumed the leadership role of

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<sup>59</sup> B. E. Winger, Evangelism at Macha, *Evangelical Visitor*, December 22, 1947: 465.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

indigenous evangelists, the next category of being indigenous leadership, namely the teacher-pastor, was exclusively for formally trained teachers.

#### **4.4.3. Advent of Teacher-Pastors as Church Leaders**

Another significant leadership role for the indigenous Tonga Christians was that of the teacher-pastor. These leaders are referred to in various Brethren in Christ historical literature variously as teacher-pastor or pastor-teacher. Since, in the initial stages, these leaders were trained first of all as teachers who then were expected to carry out the spiritual work of the out station, it is more appropriate to refer to this group of leaders as teacher-pastors. Their training was a two-year teacher-training programme that included selected Bible courses. Once there were in field they taught the rudiments of basic education including writing, reading, and arithmetic during the week and performed their spiritual service on Sunday for the whole community. In this regard, the teacher-pastor occupied the roles of both educational and spiritual leader respectively. It was in the latter role that the teacher-pastor exerted their church leadership influence. While serving as spiritual leaders, they were also recognised as village community leaders.

##### ***4.4.3.1. The Position of Teacher- Pastors***

The out-school was the centre of operation for the teacher-pastor. These schools differed from Mission Station schools. While the Brethren in Christ missionaries were normally responsible for the schools at the mission station, the teacher-pastors served in out-schools which were located away from the mission station. As the administrative centre for the mission work of the Brethren in Christ in a given locality, it was at the mission station that the teacher-pastor was prepared to teach the indigenous Christians in the villages surrounding the mission through the out-schools.<sup>61</sup>

The establishment of village schools was aimed at teaching the Tonga people how to read and write. The intended purpose was to enable the indigenous people to read the Bible for themselves, and be able to teach the gospel they learned to others.

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<sup>61</sup> They were sometimes referred to as village schools in Brethren in Christ literature and by virtue of their location.

Mission reports submitted to the Foreign Mission Board from the late 1920s to the 1940s consistently reflected the two-fold purpose of civilising and Christianising of the Tonga people.<sup>62</sup>

The educational and industrial work was shown at most centres. There is a demand for education among the natives. The boarding schools at the missions have continued to fill a real need. The young lives, which have been influenced, will we hope, go out and better the kraal life of the natives. The real good done cannot be evaluated by monetary standards. The out-schools have also been centres from which the gospel story was heralded forth as well as the rudiments of learning given.<sup>63</sup>

"It is often a battle to get the people to agree to their children learning, especially girls. The old people want to marry them off young. Satan holds tight on this prey. Our desire is that these children, as well as their parents, may not only be school minded, but that they will become Godly too. Pray for our teachers, as their responsibility is real heavy. Pray with us that seed may fall on good soil, and many be gathered in."<sup>64</sup>

While on one hand, the demand for education for African boys was generally evident, there was on the other hand the challenge of educating girls. The Brethren in Christ mission was not the only society that faced this problem. Other mission societies encountered similar challenges of educating girls in their schools. For example, the Church of Scotland missionaries at Lubwa Mission faced similar challenges. They did not manage to attract girls in sufficient numbers to their schools. One of the reasons for this phenomenon was the general tendency by parents to give girls in marriage to older men of the village when they reached the age of puberty.<sup>65</sup> The apparent under representation of girls in schools was reflected in a lack of female teachers and church leaders in the life and work of the Brethren in Christ mission in the ensuing years.

Out-schools were decentralised outlets for mission work. Both trained and untrained teachers were employed in out-schools. However, it was the trained teachers that took the teacher-pastor role. The Brethren in Christ mission opened the first two out-

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<sup>62</sup> The word 'Christianisation' is used in this chapter to denote the communication of and conversion to the Christian faith.

<sup>63</sup> H. H. Brubaker, *Africa General Report*, 1929.

<sup>64</sup> B. E. Winger, *Report on Macha Outstation*, 1947: 78.

<sup>65</sup> Ipenburg, 'All Good Men', 1992: 101. See also P. Snelson, *Educational Development in Northern Rhodesia*, 1974: 214- 215.



schools in the Sikalongo district in 1930.<sup>66</sup> The setting up of out-schools was the natural avenue of leadership influence in villages. Missionaries also used this means of sending teachers to outstations as a means of developing church leaders. Teacher-pastors had direct influence on the children under their leadership and instruction.

The demand for school places by Africans was related to the perceived value of education. While Africans had their form of education, the western model was more attractive for the perceived benefits such as future job opportunities as teachers and clerical officers in the government. Ipenburg rightly observed, regarding the attraction of mission education with its intrinsic potential for upward mobility and status:

Young men were especially attracted to the mission because the education it offered provided a shortcut to positions of influence and authority they could have got otherwise only after a long period, for instance by becoming a head of the family or head of a village. Like government messengers, mission teachers, and evangelists formed a new class with authority and status derived from the Europeans, through which they could join a ruling class. They were among the few who were being remunerated.<sup>67</sup>

The work of teacher-pastor supports this assertion. Their leadership role was recognised in villages. They offered and complemented traditional leadership of the time. The report by Eyer, Brethren in Christ missionary in charge of the Macha outstations, demonstrates the prevailing need.

Recently a group of five men representing five villages were in to see about a school. These men said that they were past the age of learning, but they wanted their children to have the privilege that they did not have.<sup>68</sup>

Teachers who are working at the outposts have great opportunities as they work with many children who come to school. Their work doesn't stop there for they are the shepherds of their communities. Therefore, it is important that they are worthy of their confidence, and are thus able to work with the people.<sup>69</sup>

Winger's outstation report highlighted the two-fold missionary strategy of education and converting the indigenous Tonga people. This strategy was encouraged by

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<sup>66</sup> H. H. Brubaker, *Sikalongo Outschool Report*, 1930.

<sup>67</sup> A. Ipenburg, *All Good Men*, 1992: 54.

<sup>68</sup> E. S Eyer, *Macha Village School Report*, 1940: 38.

<sup>69</sup> B. E Winger, *Macha Outstation Report*, 1943.

African demand for education, to which missionaries responded by establishing additional schools. One of the fears was that the secular government would take over the educational task and thus influence the Tonga people's way of life. In an attempt to prevent the government takeover of the educational sector in their region, Brethren in Christ missionaries made sure of their full involvement in education. Mary Kreider in her article in the denomination's periodical reflected on the consequences of allowing the government to take charge of schools in their region.

But Africa is wanting education. If we cannot give it to them with the gospel, the government will without it - and the last state of that man will be infinitely worse than the first.<sup>70</sup>

It seems from Kreider's article that there was a concern that if the government was only involved in education, the Tonga people, left without spiritual input from missionaries, would merely acquire western civilisation without Christianity. The Brethren in Christ perception therefore was that educated Africans who were not converted to Christianity posed the challenge of negatively influencing other Tonga people away from mission teachings. Supposedly, the unconverted African elite was evidently seen as a stumbling block to the propagation and advancement of Christianity. Missionaries were not only concerned about the academic development of the Africans, but also the biblical and moral influences that they could exert on them.

However, with the already subsidising mission education, there was another reason for Brethren in Christ missionaries to be eager in their pursuit of establishing schools in their area. If they did not take on education as a means of propagating their faith and denominational teaching, other mission societies would move into their area and draw people into their church denominations.

If the government withdraws its financial support, it will also withdraw its moral support, which means that we are operating our schools apart from the Government recognition. This would enable another society to enter our district and establish schools. It may be said what difference would it make if we continued the spiritual work and held the religious services. The educational [work] could be done by someone else. At this stage of the native's stage of development, I think it would be impossible to run the

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<sup>70</sup> M. C Kreider, Missions: Shall African Schools Be Christian Schools? *Evangelical Visitor*, February 24, 1947.

church work apart from the schools. The natives would naturally go to the place where they receive more benefit.<sup>71</sup>

With the realisation of the strategic role of education in mission work, Brethren in Christ missionaries embarked on raising up teacher-pastors. Thus, the setting up of schools became the natural means for encouraging indigenous church leaders to emerge.

#### 4.4.3.2. *The Role of Teacher-Pastors*

Teacher-pastors were appointed men who were responsible for the extension of mission work. They helped to fulfil the missionary strategy of educating the indigenous people for the purpose of reading the Bible, the primary source of Christian religious instruction. Having been trained and posted to various schools by missionaries, teacher-pastors were an extension of missionary authority. They were also a further indication of the influence in the newly established religion among the Tonga. Unlike the deacons and evangelists who assumed only limited authority and responsibilities, the teacher-pastors were conscious of their own authority and responsibility. They served in autonomous roles in the outstations with distant supervision from missionaries at the main Mission station. The indigenous teacher played an indispensable role in the establishment and extension of mission work in the remote Tonga villages. Commenting on the suitability of the indigenous personnel in out-schools, one of the missionaries remarked:

The work of out-schools is mainly the work of the African church. The African teacher and preacher go forth among his own people to build a community church through teaching the children and doing pastoral evangelism.<sup>72</sup>

The importance of the role of indigenous Christians in mission work was shared by other societies in Central Southern Africa. Robert Laws, in his proposal on the role of African clergy to the General Assembly of the Free Church, asserted that if Africa

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<sup>71</sup> H. H Brubaker, *Letter to Foreign Mission Board*, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 1929.

<sup>72</sup> J. E Hershey, *Sikalongo Outstation Report*, 1945: 49.

was to be won for Christ, only there was no if about it, it was to be won by Africans themselves.<sup>73</sup>

The daily duty of the teacher-pastor included teaching in the school during the week and assuming the role of a minister at the weekend. Therefore, they exerted both academic and spiritual leadership influences in the community.

The teachers' work consists of teaching as well as being responsible for all religious services. It is his duty also to visit and encourage the people in his district. He is also to be an example to his people in word, deed, and thought. We are glad for the faithful ones, but then our hearts are made sad many times for these who must be set aside because of some sin or misconduct.<sup>74</sup>

Teacher-pastors were in fact custodians of both western and African worldviews and value systems. On the one hand, the acquisition of western training and knowledge equipped them with academic skills that they passed on to the children in schools. On the other hand, their inherent African cultural orientation made them bearers of and representatives of African traditional values.

As the embodiment of two worldviews, the teacher-pastor engaged in integrating western and African value systems. The teacher's leadership influence was also twofold. The teacher-pastor exerted both western and traditional influence. In the case of a conflict of values, both the westerners and the Africans could have looked to the teacher-pastor. However, due to the imbalance of authority and power, western values prevailed over African values. Western and Christian values were perceived by missionaries to be one and the same. For example, some African teacher-pastors were dismissed from their jobs for what was viewed as misconduct activities such as engaging in polygamous marriages. This practice was acceptable in the African context but was against the new Christian religion according to the missionary perspective.

#### 4.4.3.3. *The Disciplinary Challenges of Teacher-Pastors*

The teacher-pastors could be dismissed from their positions for practices which were categorised as immoral and sinful by missionaries. These were accepted as such by

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<sup>73</sup> Quoted in W. P Livingstone, *Laws of Livingstonia*, London, 1921, p. 104. See also T. J Thompson, African Leadership in Livingstonia Mission 1875-1900, *Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. II, 1973: 81.

<sup>74</sup> R. H Mann, *Sikalongo Mission Report*, 1973: 90.

Africans in view of the new Christian religious perspective. What amounted to being sinful and immoral misconduct was based on the biblical interpretations of the missionaries.

"In the boarding school a higher standard or grade was put on, so we had a larger staff of native teachers. We were sorry we had to dismiss one teacher because of immoral conduct."<sup>75</sup>

There are now twelve outstations in the Sikalongo circuit. Near to the beginning of the year, one school had to be closed because of disobedience of its teacher. There was no teacher available to put in his place. In the middle of the year another teacher fell into sin, and is now under discipline. He seems to be taking his discipline in a spirit of meekness and obedience.<sup>76</sup>

Dismissal of teachers was in line with the Brethren in Christ codes of conduct and their convictions about church discipline. The practice of church discipline stemmed from the denomination's strong emphasis on separation from the world. This was based on the mission's view of the church as the visible demonstration of the kingdom of God. According to Sider, the denomination's historian, the church claimed that discipline was given to achieve restoration of the one who had sinned. Discipline was employed when members violated the teachings and rules of the church.<sup>77</sup>

While it was the duty of the mission to discipline disobedient teachers, missionaries acknowledged that the process of dismissing teachers was challenging and unpleasant. It was most distressing in cases, where the teachers were among the outstanding converts.

It was our unpleasant duty to dismiss several teachers for misconduct. These teachers certainly need our prayers. The temptations are many and hard. Satan bids high for those whom God would have as leader, but as they are held up to a throne of grace through prayer, God can keep and use them, and is using many of which we are thankful.

As we enter a new year in the Outstation work we ask an interest in your prayers that the teachers will not yield to the temptations of sin as well as high wages, and that the children as well as the village folks may come to a

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<sup>75</sup> R. H Mann, *Sikalongo Mission Annual Report*, 1941: 77.

<sup>76</sup> H. H Brubaker, *Sikalongo Outstation General Report*, 1948: 57.

<sup>77</sup> E. M Sider, *The Brethren in Christ in Canada*, Evangel Press, Nappanee, 1988: 83.

more full realisation of what real salvation is, and that the academic part may keep its rightful place.<sup>78</sup>

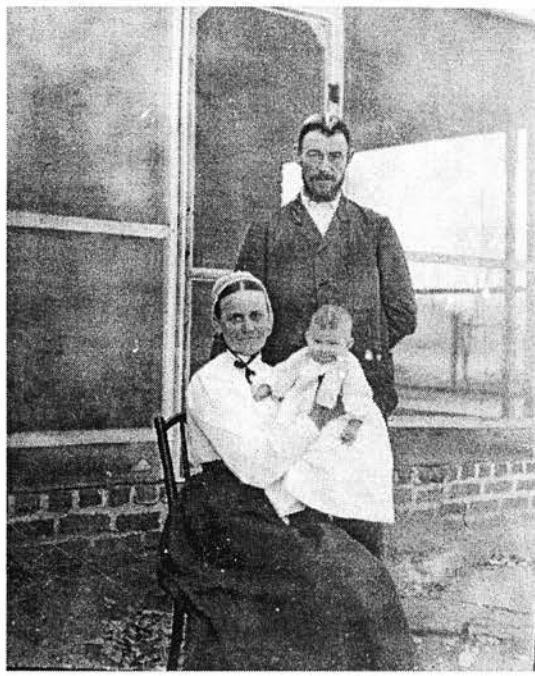
By virtue of being instructors of knowledge in their communities, the teacher-pastors were perceived as both church and community leaders. Their leadership influence included both academic and spiritual spheres. Among the Tonga people where the Brethren in Christ worked, there was no recorded instance of conflict between teacher-pastors and traditional leaders, such as chiefs and headmen. This contrasts with other mission societies.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> M. S Eyer, *Macha Outstation Report*, 1946.

<sup>79</sup> A. Ipenburg, *'All Good Men'*, 1992: 54. See also B Garvey, *The Development of White Fathers' Mission*, and 1977, Bemba Chiefs and Catholic Missions, 1898-1935, in *Journal of African History*, quoted in Ipenburg, *'All Good Men'*, 1992.





*Plate # 5: Myron and Adda Taylor, Founders of Sikalongo Mission Station, with their Daughter, Ruth Taylor*

#### **4.5. Summary and Preliminary Conclusions**

The progress of early missionary and indigenous leadership was influenced by both the educational and the spiritual advancement of the Tonga people. However, as shown in this chapter, the initial leadership role of deacon did not require educational qualifications due to the nature of the duties carried out by the indigenous leaders. The deacons were primarily assistants to missionary pastors and church planters. The subsequent stage of indigenous leaders was that of itinerant evangelists. This role in some cases overlapped with that of deacons. Evangelists like deacons had limited education. Some were being informally rather than formally trained. In a mission-led and dominated era, evangelists remained under the direct control and supervision of the missionary with little autonomous authority. Missionaries utilised identity, authority and power over them, by virtue of their being purveyors of a foreign Christian religion with primarily western methods of propagation among the Tonga people were primarily western.

Unlike the roles of deacons and evangelists, the leadership position of teacher-pastor was of central strategic influence to the mission of educating and evangelising the Tonga. These church leaders were chosen on the assumption that they had a new-found Christian faith through personal conversion. However, the evidence of the

number of teachers who were dismissed on the grounds of immoral conduct raised justifiable concerns about the genuineness of these conversions.

Conversion can be considered either as a change of mind in the form of a specific individual spiritual experience or as a change of allegiance, and the acceptance of a new environment of thoughts and life. The latter is, in the nature of things much more gradual and less dramatic than the first. The Brethren in Christ subscribed to the former version of conversion, namely, the specific individual spiritual experience. This phenomenon was well demonstrated by the pietistic experiences of the founders of Brethren in Christ in North America. According to Sider, the denomination's founding leaders

were among those who attended revival meetings. As other, they had experiential conversions, or had significantly responded to the pietistic emphasis on prayer, bible reading, and joyful experience of the heart.<sup>80</sup>

The denomination's periodical, *Evangelical Visitor*, is replete with testimonies of personal conversions underlined with repentance from sin and emphasis on adult baptism. This phenomenon is particularly illustrated on the African mission field in the lives of two evangelists, Sibanda,<sup>81</sup> and Apuleni.<sup>82</sup>

Despite strong emphasis on experiential conversion, it was probable that some teachers may have adopted a more pragmatic use of the mission and the church. Ipenburg described such an approach among the Bembas of Lubwa mission. He reports that many Africans at Lubwa who generally became Christians in the course of, and as the result of education normally adopted the pragmatic use of the mission for what they could get out of it. Their presence in school meant automatic affiliation with the church and the benefits of the mission.

It was possible that some Africans joined the school with the secondary motive of getting employed as teachers. Most teachers were heading out-schools. With desire for upward mobility, even pragmatic converts vied for such positions without

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<sup>80</sup> E. M Sider, *Brethren in Christ in Canada*, 1988: 3.

<sup>81</sup> (Anonymous Author), With the Church of Rhodesia in their Jubilee, *Evangelical Visitor*, August, 23, 1948: 10.

<sup>82</sup> B. E Winger, Evangelism at Macha, *Evangelical Visitor*, December, 22, 1947: 465.

genuine allegiance to the mission's moral code. The result was likely failure and dismissal from the positions.

The preparation for teacher-pastor was primarily oriented towards secular academic qualifications. However, the mission included components of basic instruction to equip them for pastoral responsibilities. Pastoral work occupied a comparatively smaller portion of their daily work.

The limitation of pastoral instruction and the way the work was shared between two tasks likely affected the output of church work. The teacher-pastor model presented a potential tension between two supposedly full-time tasks. This in turn affected the effectiveness of the pastoral role of the teachers. It could be argued that teacher-pastors were mainly educationists who engaged in pastoral work on weekends.

The imbalance, in terms of time allocation, between teaching and pastoral work eventually led to the mission to change its training strategy for church workers. In the late 1940s, there was growing dissatisfaction with the preparation of teacher-pastors. The idea of establishing a Bible school in Northern Rhodesia arose. The purpose of this institution would be the training of men for the work of spiritual ministry whose main and only responsibility would be the nurturing of converts.

The divided attention of teacher-pastor between school and church must have affected the growth and expansion of the local churches. Shewmaker argues that missions that deliberately focussed on equipping Africans for church planting were more effective than those that pursued the mixed approach of education and evangelism. Teachers tended to concentrate on schools rather than church work.

The shortcomings of teacher-pastors manifested by immoral failures such as polygamy, drunkenness, and adultery, could have been caused by the dichotomous view of separating the traditional from the spiritual values. This feature epitomised the tension between western and African traditional values. For instance, the Tonga people traditionally accepted and tolerated polygamous marriages in their society. In fact, it was expected of Tonga traditional leaders to have more than one wife. It was therefore not entirely surprising that these teachers who were now regarded as community leaders, succumbed to the temptation of polygamy. There were other

pertinent reasons for polygamy such as the need for more labour on their small farms. At any rate, the image of and status of traditional Tonga leadership included in most cases that the leaders have more than one wife.

Other supposed moral failures such as drunkenness and adultery became more rampant when the government took over the responsibility of paying teachers' salaries. The allegiance of teachers to missionaries, who had once paid their salaries, but now no longer did so waned. After the government took over the teachers' salaries, indigenous teachers realised that missionaries had little or no authority over their moral behaviour either. The mission could no longer impose Christian moral values. Thus, the mission could not impose punitive measures on teachers who failed to comply with the mission's moral code of conduct. In the past punitive measures could have included non-payment of, or reduced payment of salaries. Generally speaking, it can be observed that though there was a progressive emergence of indigenous church leadership, missionaries were still in control of most of the work. Indigenous leaders had little authority in carrying out church work. Neither the indigenous evangelists or teacher-pastors were ordained, thus they could not baptise and officiate a 'holy communion'.

The matter of ordination became the pending need in the process of developing Tonga church leaders. Training was a prerequisite for ordination. The subsequent chapter therefore focuses on the training and ordination of Church leaders.

## CHAPTER 5

### **THE EQUIPPING STAGE: THE EMERGENCE OF TRAINED AFRICAN CHURCH LEADERS: 1948 -1960**



*Plate # 6: Mission Superintendent Musser with Early Evangelists Mizinga and Mafula*

#### **5.1 Introduction**

Prior to 1948, education was the main focal point for the evangelisation of the Tonga people and the establishment of local churches. Therefore, the expansion of the Brethren in Christ mission was based on the growing network of out-schools in outlying villages.

However, a realisation that the educational strategy of establishing schools as a means of Christian witness, though successful in itself, would not bring into existence a viable church, prompted the missionary leadership to adjust its priorities towards a more church centred emphasis. This discovery compelled the mission leadership to embark on the establishment of a Bible school whose purpose was to train indigenous Christians for various church related duties with a primary focus on evangelism and pastoral ministry.

This chapter will attempt to demonstrate the paradigm shift effected by the introduction of Bible school training in the emergence of indigenous church leaders, resulting in a shift of emphasis from teacher-pastors to pastors and ordained overseers. In this regard, the chapter will also examine the necessity for trained indigenous church leadership. This will include the separation of teacher training from Bible school training, with its implication of a separation of the departments of education and pastoral ministries. Furthermore, the chapter will examine the pace and process of appointing indigenous overseers, who later became senior church leaders eligible for ordination. Lastly, attention will be given to the emergence of ordained indigenous church leaders, and the implications of ordination in church/mission leadership will be explored.

## ***5.2. The Impetus for Establishing Bible Training***

The Brethren in Christ Mission's attempt to employ an educational strategy in its mission endeavours had implications, since it was extensively dependent on out-schools and secular teachers. Although teachers were recruited for the primary purpose of carrying out secular education, the head teachers of out-schools were equally expected to perform pastoral duties to both the pupils and the people of the local community.

A problem encountered in the implementation of the educational strategy was the dual demand on head teachers to handle the two tasks of secular teaching and spiritual instruction. With this trend of performing 'double duties', the pace of establishing churches was slower than desired. The expansion of Christian witness was limited to the establishment of schools.

Another element closely related to the challenge of 'double duties', was the imbalance between the secular and the religious subjects in the curriculum used in the training of schoolteachers. The curriculum had few courses in pastoral teaching and ministry. Such disproportionate input in teacher training impacted the output in pastoral work. Given the secular training offered to teachers, and the amount of time respectively invested in teaching and pastoring, Bible teaching and instruction tended to be of secondary importance compared to secular education. This tendency divided



time and loyalty to the two equally demanding duties of secular teaching and spiritual instruction.

Furthermore, the challenge of the Brethren in Christ educational strategy was aggravated by the lack of active participation by the older Tonga people. On one hand, it was convenient for young children to flock to the Sunday school for spiritual instruction. They were involved in secular schooling in this same environment. On the other hand, adults were more preoccupied with agrarian chores and occasionally distracted by cultural-traditional involvement and practices. The missionaries frequently recorded incidences of significant backsliding of adults due to so-called moral failures such as drunkenness and polygamy.

The apparent secondary emphasis placed on pastoral training and practice seemed to go against the intended purpose of the Brethren in Christ missionaries. The missionaries themselves were primarily devoted to the evangelisation of the Tonga people in all their activities.

As missionaries, we constantly remember that our total programme is 'Evangelism', Medical Evangelism, Educational Evangelism, Pastoral Evangelism, and above all Evangelistic Evangelism.<sup>1</sup>

Brethren in Christ missionaries had always desired to focus on evangelism as their main goal in establishing the Church among the Tonga people. However, in practice both educational and medical endeavours seemed to occupy a larger portion of their time and effort compared to their primary goal of evangelism. While evangelistic evangelism was their primary goal, Brethren in Christ missionaries discovered that in reality their efforts were spent on educational and medical services. They found themselves preoccupied with establishing schools at the expense of establishing local churches. They attempted to combine the school system with church work. However, they seemed to have been exasperated with trying to cope with two equally demanding services needed by the people.

Despite Climenhaga's suggested ideal that the mission be committed primarily to evangelism, in reality BIC missionaries found themselves distracted by educational and medical work, which took them away from the primary goal of establishing local

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<sup>1</sup> A. Climenhaga, *Survey of Mission Work in Africa*, 1954: 12.

churches. This exasperation would later lead to a paradigm shift in their missionary strategy, when they eventually adopted a deliberate focus on training men for church ministry.

While Climenhaga's proposition indicated the primacy of evangelism in BIC missionary work, the recruitment record of the mission show that they recruited more teachers, nurses and doctors than evangelists and specialised church workers. Therefore, the primary goal for evangelism was the ideal aspiration, while the reality revealed the truncated or rather fragmented effort of establishing local churches through diversified efforts of educational and medical services.

Not only was there the absence of church workers but also the mission later employed teachers as primary workers for the establishment of local churches and pastoral ministry. The educational strategy was a formidable strategy in the initial stages of their missionary endeavours. However, the teachers could not cope with two seemingly full-time jobs of teaching and pastoral ministry.

The dilemma of depending on the out-school system for church establishment and expansion during the period was further compounded by the dwindling numbers of mature teachers. Most of the younger teachers showed little or no interest in the role of head teacher with its greater emphasis on the combined responsibilities of teaching and pastoring. At the same time, more female head mistresses began to emerge. However, they were not eligible for the position of teacher-pastor. Both the Brethren in Christ mission and the church were reluctant to allow women in pastoral leadership at this time of their history. There was also the seeming complication of the teachers who took up their teaching jobs mainly as a profession and means of livelihood, and yet often claimed God's 'calling' to pastoral ministry.

### ***5.3 Bible Training for Church Leaders***

With the divided attention brought about by the 'double duties' discussed above, the pastoral role was inadequately catered for. The low input into the pastoral ministry training was another factor that was soon addressed by the missionaries' suggestion of starting a Bible college as a way of addressing the slow process towards the establishment of a viable church.

### 5.3.1 Bible School Opens

During the Africa Missionary Conference of 1947, which was an exclusive annual gathering of missionaries, the Field Executive Committee discussed the possibility of establishing a Bible School. In his Memoirs, Climenhaga alludes to the subject as follows:

There was a feeling of urgency or necessity to get a Bible School started where we could train evangelists or preachers who could go out in evangelistic work. We did have evangelists, but it was felt they needed to have a better training in the Bible so there could be that much more adequate biblical preaching and teaching. Some of the preaching that one heard was pretty elemental, with some very interesting strained hermeneutics at times.<sup>2</sup>

It was at Matopo Mission station during the jubilee of 1948 that the seal was placed on earlier discussions and decisions of the Field Executive Committee Meeting held during the 1947 missionary conference, that the Wanezi Bible School be opened in 1948. The notion of starting a Bible School was thought to be so urgent that the question of potential students was virtually overlooked. In the report of Wanezi Bible School of 1948, Arthur Climenhaga, who was the superintendent of the Wanezi out-schools, acknowledged that the decision to open the school was made although only one student had registered. Climenhaga further acknowledged:

At that time, we knew of only one prospective student, but with faith that thus hath God led, we proceeded with plans.<sup>3</sup>

In consultation with the General Superintendent of both Northern and Southern Rhodesia, Bishop Brubaker, the opening date for Wanezi Bible School was set for Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1948. According to Anna Engle, who had been appointed as the first teacher in the Bible School, this was a memorable day for the Brethren in Christ Mission in Africa:

That Monday morning God brought it forth – the praise and honour are wholly His. The entire mission staff was virtually interested and their feeling might best be expressed in the words of the Psalmist. This is the day, which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> A. Climenhaga, *Memoirs* 1999: 178.

<sup>3</sup> A. Climenhaga, The Wanezi Bible School, *Evangelical Visitor*, 7<sup>th</sup> February, 1949: 4.

<sup>4</sup> A. R. Engle, The Wanezi Bible School, *Evangelical Visitor*, January 24, 1949: 7.

In the first week of opening the Bible School two students were enrolled, namely Sanday Mavundhla, a Sindebele speaking lay preacher, and Samuel Munacoonga, a Tonga speaking evangelist. During the following week, two other students were accepted in the programme, thus the final registration for that first year was four men. Reporting in the *Evangelical Visitor*, Sister Engle captures the spirited anticipation of the events of the second week:

Monday of the second week Cita Moyo at whose home there had been illness, and Mtshazo Nkala entered. Thus, we launched out into the first year's work of the Wanezi Bible School with four enthusiastic students, older Christian men who love the Lord Jesus and His work<sup>5</sup>

All four students were actively involved in Christian work. Climenhagas's description of the men in his 1948 Wanezi report demonstrates the calibre of the men. He indicates that the men were established leaders in the church. For example, Cita Moyo was a teacher-pastor and Mtshazo Nkala was a lay preacher.<sup>6</sup>

According to Marshall Poe, a former missionary who served as a Bible College teacher, most of the indigenous workers were largely untrained and did their work because of the sense of 'calling' upon their lives to preach and evangelise. They were encouraged to attend periodical retreats and conferences. There were training sessions organised for encouragement and spiritual refreshment, however, these did not include much in-depth theological training.<sup>7</sup>

Despite their lack of previous formal ministerial training, the first group of students to be enrolled in the Wanezi Bible School had considerable practical ministry experience in addition to their sense of 'calling'.

One came from Matopo circuit, Sanday Mavundhla, the local preacher in charge of Gwandavale outstation. Two came from Mtshabezi Circuit, Cita Moyo of Mayezane Outstation and Mtshazo Nkala of Silawa Outstation. One came from Northern Rhodesia, an evangelist at Sikalongo Mission, Samuel Munacoonga.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> A. Climenhaga, *Report of Wanezi Mission*, 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1948.

<sup>7</sup> M. Poe, Interview, July 1990.

<sup>8</sup> A. Climenhaga, *Report of Wanezi Mission*, 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1948. Munachoonga's full name was Samuel Munachoonga Munda .

At this early period in the establishment of the Bible School, the absence of female students was conspicuous. The all-male student enrolment would have future implications on the development of indigenous Church leaders among the Tonga people. However, some of the students attending Bible School came with their spouses, while others attended by themselves.

Wanezi Bible School catered for both Northern and Southern Rhodesia. The first students enrolled in the school represented two African language groups, namely Tonga from Northern Rhodesia and Sindebele from Southern Rhodesia. The designated Brethren in Christ personnel for the Bible School was composed of two missionaries. Earlier in the year, a decision was made that Anna Engle would be placed at Wanezi to teach in the Bible School. Arthur Climenhaga was appointed as Principal of the Bible School.<sup>9</sup>

Anna Engle had served in Northern Rhodesia among the Tonga. She was fluent in the Tonga language and facilitated the Brethren in Christ Bible translation project in Citonga. Prior to arriving on the mission field, Engle had attended Messiah Bible College and Elizabethtown College, where she graduated with a Bachelor's degree in 1926. Engle was sent out to the African Mission field by her home church, Manor-Pequea in Pennsylvania, in June 1926. During her second missionary furlough, she did further training at Columbia University and Seminary in New York where she gained a Masters degree. She then taught at Messiah College before going to the mission field in Africa. She served at Sikalongo Mission in Zambia where she wrote a Tonga Primer for use in schools. Engle's final responsibility while in Zambia was that of being a co-ordinator in the Tonga Scripture translation.<sup>10</sup>

Engle was appointed as a teacher at Wanezi Bible School. Climenhaga was named as the first principal of the Bible school. Climenhaga arrived on the mission field on January 6, 1946. He had studied at various colleges and graduate schools, and held a Bachelor's degree from Pasedena College, a Master's degree from Taylor University and a Doctor of Sacred Theology degree from Los Angeles Baptist Theological Seminary. Before joining the Brethren in Christ mission work, he engaged in evangelistic work, and was a teacher and President of Beulah College in California.

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<sup>9</sup> A. Climenhaga, *Memoirs*, Messiah College Archives, 1999: 178.

<sup>10</sup> A. R. Engle, *There is No Difference*, E.V. Publishing House, Nappanee, Indiana, 1950: 373.

He was sent to Africa for mission service by the Upland (California) congregation. His main role in the field was that of Superintendent of Wanezi outstations. It is probable that his appointment could have stemmed from his administrative experience in theological education. However, Climenhaga also indicated that the mission purposely desired to have a male missionary as a Principal of the Bible College. In his memoirs Climenhaga said:

I think there was a feeling that my Beulah College experience would be helpful in such a study. I must admit that down in my heart, I had a yearning to help start that Bible School. You could imagine my joy when finally as we moved on toward the end of 1947 it was decided by the General Superintendent and the Executive Committee that I should do that along with my duties at Wanezi Mission.<sup>11</sup>

The purpose and objective held by the Brethren in Christ missionaries of the Wanezi Bible School were well illustrated by Engle's report in the *Evangelical Visitor* of 1948:

Were the African missionary group asked to formulate the Bible School objective in definite terms, we should say: (1) That within each student the Holy Spirit may reproduce the kind of life set forth in the Bible. (2) That each man may feel God's call to this work. (3) That each may know His Bible and be a man of prayer unto effective soul winning.<sup>12</sup>

From its inception, the Brethren in Christ mission in Africa placed great emphasis on the vitality of the Holy Scriptures in their teaching ministry. They believed that every Christian needed to know the Bible more than any other book.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, the establishment of a Bible training school was an affirmation of one of their cardinal principles of belief.

As indicated earlier in this chapter Wanezi Bible School served both Northern and Southern Rhodesia. The missionary activities in Southern Rhodesia were more advanced than those in Northern Rhodesia. Serving both Northern and Southern Rhodesia presented Wanezi Bible School with the challenge of communicating in three languages: Tonga, Sindebele and English. In a letter to a fellow missionary at the time, Engle remarked:

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<sup>11</sup> A. Climenhaga, *Memoirs*, Messiah College Archives, 1999: 178.

<sup>12</sup> A. R. Engle The Wanezi Bible School, *Evangelical Visitor* 1948: 7.

<sup>13</sup> Africa Conference Minutes, *Wanezi Bible School Prospectus*, 1957: 1.



We wouldn't stand much inspection in classroom work as yet, from the standpoint of language. We are trilingual! ... If wishing would do the trick for me, I should be speaking fluent Sindebele tomorrow, but I had tried to impress my Greek and Latin students at Messiah College with the fact that there is no royal road to getting a language, and so I'm plodding on. Much of course is familiar and comes back but, after all, twenty years is a rather long time away from active study for Sindebele, perhaps you remember I was transferred to the North in July of 1928.<sup>14</sup>

Both Climenhaga and Engle had acquired proficient knowledge in the local languages. At the time, Climenhaga, who was serving in Southern Rhodesia, spoke Sindebele while Engle, who had served in Northern Rhodesia, spoke Tonga. It was therefore a challenge for the teachers to communicate effectively to the students from two distinct language areas. Highlighting the practical implications of the challenge of language in the teaching ministry at Wanezi Bible School, Engle stated that:

Blackboard notes were given in the two languages, laboriously prepared in the one, and then translated into the other as they were transcribed. The northern student repeatedly thanked God in prayer for a teacher, as he put it, 'with two tongues.'<sup>15</sup>

In the first year of the establishment of Wanezi Bible School, the main lectures were done in English, however, for the sake of further clarity in teaching, some discussions were done in Sindebele and in Tonga languages. There were varying educational levels of the initial students. Most of the students could follow simple English language, although, at times, parts of the lectures would even be repeated in the vernacular language by one of the students indicating that the educational levels and language abilities of the students varied.

The opening of Wanezi Bible School was neither spectacular nor formal, as indicated by Climenhaga's description of the opening session:

But what we did was with and for a purpose, setting the tone of the Bible School, the study of the Word of God. We sang an opening hymn, No. 114 in the *Amagama Okuhlabelela*:

*Izwi li makade,*

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<sup>14</sup> A. R. Engle, The Wanezi Bible School, *Evangelical Visitor*, January 24 1949.

<sup>15</sup> A. R. Engle, The Wanezi Bible School, *Evangelical Visitor*, January 24, 1949: 7.

*Li si hola njalo;*  
*Li ba tokozise*  
*Aba kolwa kulo.*<sup>16</sup>

Climenhaga went on to suggest that the free translation of that momentous opening hymn was as follows:

The word is of old, It leads us too; it causes those to rejoice who believe in it.<sup>17</sup>

Following the singing of the Sindebele hymn, Engle prayed for God's blessing and guidance on the Bible School. Thereafter, relevant Pauline portions were read by Climenhaga, with particular emphasis on the following verses:

Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine (I Timothy 4:13).

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (II Timothy 2:15).

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness (II Timothy 3:16).

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with longsuffering and doctrine (II Timothy 4:2).<sup>18</sup>

These Bible verses were given in accordance to the stated objective of the school and reflected the Mission's commitment to the teachings of the Bible.<sup>19</sup> In closing the session, two students, Sanday Mavundhla of Matopo and Munacoonga of Sikalongo added their intercession for divine grace and guidance.<sup>20</sup>

### **5.3.2 Bible School Programme and Staff**

The duration of the Wanezi course was intended to be two years. Each year, students were expected to spend all sessions of learning at the school. According to Climenhaga's report, each session was to be of ninety days in duration. However,

<sup>16</sup> A. Climenhaga, The Wanezi Bible School, *Evangelical Visitor*, February 7, 1949: 4.

<sup>17</sup> A. Climenhaga, The Wanezi Bible school, *Evangelical Visitor*, February 7, 1949: 4.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> A. R. Engle, The Wanezi Bible School, *Evangelical Visitor*, January 24, 1949: 7.

<sup>20</sup> A. Climenhaga, The Wanezi Bible School, *Evangelical Visitor*, February 7, 1949: 4.

given the uniqueness of the year 1948 with the Mission's Jubilee celebrations, the initial term of the first year was shortened to sixty days.<sup>21</sup>

The Bible School was in session for sixty days. Due to the Jubilee Conference, it was opened later this year than will be usual in future sessions. The Lord willing we envisage opening in May of this year of 1949 and after a break in August for Conference running until November. This gives the men time to harvest their crops at home before coming to school and leaves them off in time for summer ploughing and planting.<sup>22</sup>

The school's duration of learning was carefully organised to take into consideration the subsistence occupation of the prospective students. On one hand, such a sensitive approach left the students with limited time for Bible training. On the other hand, time away from school gave the student extended opportunity for practical church work.

The first intake of Wanezi students graduated in 1949. According to the report on Wanezi Bible School, Climenhaga described the graduation proceedings as follows:

The faithful Cita Moyo, Sanday Mavundhla, Mtshazo Nkala, Samuel Munda had come to the completion of their two year course. Since it was the first graduation exercise of the Wanezi Bible School, it was fitting that our Bishop, Brother Brubaker, gave the commencement address.<sup>23</sup>

After graduation, Sanday Mavundhla offered himself as an evangelist for the regular evangelistic schedule. This schedule was seasonal, leaving the evangelist time for cultivation and harvest periods. Samuel Munacoonga Munda returned to Northern Rhodesia, where he was already listed as an evangelist. The other two, namely Cita Moyo and Mtshazo, returned to their respective homes to carry on as local preachers.<sup>24</sup>

The number of staff appointments at Wanezi Bible School which were effected in 1948 by the Africa Mission Conference, through the Executive Board, continued to be the same in 1950. Anna Engle was appointed as teacher and Climenhaga was designated as the Principal of the Bible School. It is significant to note that the main

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<sup>21</sup> A. Climenhaga, *Report of Wanezi Bible School*, 1948.

<sup>22</sup> A. Climenhaga, *The Wanezi Bible School*, *Evangelical Visitor*, February 7, 1949.

<sup>23</sup> A. Climenhaga, *Report of Wanezi Outschool and Wanezi Bible School*, 1949.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

Bible teaching load was given to Anna Engle, a female missionary, who gave spiritual instructions to male students.

Of the three men that entered the school, two were from Southern Rhodesia and one from Northern Rhodesia, Macha Mission area. All of these men, under the teaching of sister Engle, searched the scriptures to learn in them the words of life and more effective methods of service in biblical evangelism.<sup>25</sup>

Engle carried most of the teaching responsibilities at the newly opened Bible school while Climenhaga served as the Wanezi Superintendent of the out-schools and performing his duties as Principal of the Bible School. Climenhaga also conducted periodic evening prayers and practical expository preaching work, which served as a model for the students of the best way of teaching the Bible.

While Anna Engle was primarily responsible for teaching and ministry preparation, Climenhaga took charge of the welfare of the students. He was responsible for material and food supplies, including management of the finances of the college.

Engle, a female teacher, continued to train all male students at Wanezi Bible School. She was given this role of leadership at a time when few women in the Brethren in Christ mission were leaders. Her leadership role was similar to that of Frances Davidson, the founder of Macha Mission. One of the main contributing factors to the assuming the teaching role in an all-male Bible School was her academic credentials. Like Davidson, she was not only educated, but also assertive in her approach to her work. She was not easily swayed by the opinions of co-workers. Climenhaga was of the opinion that Engle tended not to be too dependent on others, and she was comfortable doing her own work in her own way.<sup>26</sup> It is possible to surmise that as a single lady, she could serve without the demands of marriage or the need to submit to a husband.

As the work of the Bible School developed, levels of training were equally revised and upgraded. One significant development involved the change of name of the school.<sup>27</sup> During the African General Conference of 1956, at a business meeting of

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<sup>25</sup> A. Climenhaga, *Report of Wanezi Outstation and Wanezi Bible School*, 1950.

<sup>26</sup> A. Climenhaga, *Memoirs*, Messiah Archives, 1999: 179.

<sup>27</sup> Incidentally, the fundamental reasons were not stated in the archival or ethnographic research sources.

the executive board, a decision was passed that Wanezi Bible School was to be renamed the Wanezi Bible Institute.<sup>28</sup>

### 5.3.3. Vernacular and English Teaching Programmes

In light of the challenge of trilingual language communication, a vernacular Sindebele Bible course was introduced to cater for the less educated students. The less educated were students who could not speak English well.

The vernacular Bible course was discussed and will be put on when a missionary with the qualifications in the African language is available as instructor.<sup>29</sup>

The Bible courses in the Sindebele language were organised on a two-term basis. The African Conference resolved that the vernacular courses would run over a two-term period from January to May and August to November. These intervals would ensure that the students had time for cultivation and harvest.<sup>30</sup>

With the development of the vernacular programme, the Bible Institute was developing church leaders at two levels of educational ability: those literate in English and those only literate in a vernacular language. Both were catered for. Hostetter, who was the Field Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board, confirmed the planned course in his Africa visit report of 1955.

Beginning after the new year, a higher standard of Bible training will be given to a better-trained group of interested African Church leaders. It is believed that this will be a growing programme in coming years. At the same time plans are that Bible training on the lower level will also be continued as part of the programme.<sup>31</sup>

There are evidences of a greatly increased interest on the part of the African in biblical education and the hope of the missionaries is for a still greater interest as the higher classes in theological instruction is opened in January of 1956.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Anna Engle, The Wanezi Bible School, *Evangelical Visitor*, November 5, 1956: 7.

<sup>29</sup> Anna Engle, The Wanezi Bible School, *Evangelical Visitor*, June 18, 1955.

<sup>30</sup> *African Conference Minutes*, 1957 Item 21.

<sup>31</sup> H. Hostetter, *Africa Visit Report*, December 1955.

<sup>32</sup> H. N. Hostetter, *Report on Africa Visit*, Hist. Mss. 13-4-1.2, 1955: 10.

The two-tier theological training scheme was both strategic as it catered for both levels of education and was contextually suitable as it included the indigenous Sindebele language. The plan kept pace with the educational development of the church leaders at the time. However, the programme was solely dependent on missionary personnel who were able to speak the vernacular languages. This was evidence of the critical absence of indigenous instructors and leadership at the level of theological training.<sup>33</sup>

There were a significant number of graduates from the Bible School and some of these graduates had been teachers prior to entering Bible School. However, after graduation they were mainly assigned to be either evangelists or pastors, as demonstrated by Engle's report in the church's periodical in 1955:

To date there have been 15 graduates, nearly all of whom are now church officials: some serving as evangelists, some as pastors, and one a builder lay-preacher in the home mission of the African Church.<sup>34</sup>

. The absence of indigenous instructors at an early stage must have impeded the development of local leadership and theological influence and reflection. The evangelists and pastors were able to interact with and engage with cultural and traditional challenges to Christianity at the local church level. The indigenous leaders were able to reflect on their own cultural and contextual challenges more readily than the missionaries.

Despite general success of the early programme of theological education from 1948 to 1955, they were also elements of failure. The apparent backsliding of some graduates was well reported, with a request for prayer for restoration. According to Engle:

Two of those 15 [graduates] have been casualties, and for them, we would ask for special prayer. The one is a Southern Rhodesia man, and the other a Northern [Rhodesia man]. However, just this past week the Sikalongo Overseer, here in Bible School at present had a word of the Northern Rhodesia man's return to God. He had been an evangelist before entering the Bible School; desiring the training of the word, he was one of the first four students, but he was trapped by the enemy. We praise God for answering

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<sup>33</sup> See appendix 3b and c for further detail of theological curriculum.

<sup>34</sup> A. R. Engle, The Wanezi Bible School, *Evangelical Visitor*, 18<sup>th</sup> June, 1955: 7.



prayer in bringing him back, the immediate instruments (according to Overseer Munsaka's information) apparently being a very ill child and the missionary nurse at Sikalongo.<sup>35</sup>

While the missionaries reported both the successes and the moral failures of the Africans, the ministry reports are silent with regard to missionary performance. Since reports were completed solely by missionaries, the matters of missionary moral failure were most likely retained confidentially amongst themselves. The missionaries had the hegemony in leading and writing of mission reports. In this regard, the concerns of indigenous Christians were peripheral in comparison to the authority of the missionary.

### 5.3.4 Bible School and the Ordination of Ministers

The significant role of Wanezi Bible Institute in the process of developing indigenous leadership was evidenced by the influence of its graduates. Almost all Wanezi graduates assumed local church leadership functions. In his survey of mission work in Africa, the then superintendent of the fieldwork, Climenhaga vouched for the graduates placement and influence in church ministries.

This past November one of the young men returned from Wanezi mission where he had just finished his Bible Study course for evangelists. He wrote me a letter and said, "Now I am ready to go out and help preach the gospel as an evangelist. I shall wait until I hear from you." In the meantime he is helping with services in the school near his home.<sup>36</sup>

In our March Revival, Evangelist Simon Munsaka, a graduate of Wanezi Bible School, served as evangelist under the blessing of the Holy Spirit. God blessed us with an excellent spirit throughout the meetings and brought a large number of boys to repentance of sin.<sup>37</sup>

A noteworthy role of Wanezi Bible Institute was the provision of specialised courses for the ordination of African ministers. At a critical stage for the development of indigenous leadership, the Bible Institute provided specific training for the ordination of the earliest overseers. Reporting in the *Evangelical Visitor*, Engle affirmed this particular progression:

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> A Climenhaga, *Survey of Mission Work in Africa, Wanezi Mission*, 1955: 37.

<sup>37</sup> A. Climenhaga, *Survey of Mission Work in Africa, Sikalongo Mission*, 1955: 71.

At present in the Bible School we are at the close of this year's work in [the] advanced [Theological] course for the training of overseers and assistants. (These are) African brethren chosen by church leaders, who as they walk on in obedience to the Lord (it is expected) will be ordained. The complete course extends over a period of three years, the men being in school a portion of each year.<sup>38</sup>

Ordination of ministers on the African mission field followed the same pattern as the Brethren in Christ in North American, where the church required both the academic qualification and evidence of the spiritual gifting of the potential candidate. Although Wanezi Bible School was to play an important role in the expansion of ordained ministry among the Brethren in Christ, offering specialised courses for this purpose, the first ordination of African ministers took place in 1944, four years before the institution opened.<sup>39</sup> The act of ordination granted the minister both privileges and duties. The authority of ordination was conferred by the Bishop or Field General Superintendent, and the Field Executive Board.<sup>40</sup>

On motion, it was decided that the Field Executive Board is hereby authorised to give such necessary examinations as may be deemed advisable. It was further decided that their ordination shall be for life, subject to good behaviour, ability, and efficient service.<sup>41</sup>

The privileges and responsibilities of the African ordained minister were similar to those of the North American ministers, which included the administering of Holy Communion and conducting of baptism according to the discretion of the General Superintendent. The ordained African minister was also appointed as a marriage officer.

As far as possible weddings shall be performed at the outstation from which the bridegroom comes, and shall be performed when the minister is visiting the outstation. All wedding fees shall be paid into the Preacher's Fund.<sup>42</sup>

Part of the status of the ordained African minister was in the title conferred on him, which gave him the authority and privilege of a respected teacher.

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<sup>38</sup> Anna Engle, , The Wanezi Bible School, *Evangelical Visitor*, June 8, 1955: 7.

<sup>39</sup> Significant events of Fifty Years in Rhodesia, *Evangelical Visitor*, August 23, 1948: 10.

<sup>40</sup> *African Conference Minutes*, Article XI, 1944.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *African Conference Minutes, Regulations Concerning African Ministers*, Article XI, See Appendix 2.

The ordained African Minister shall be given the title 'Reverend' in English and *Umfundisi* in Sindebele.<sup>43</sup>

In the Tonga language, the ordained minister was known as *Milinguzi*. Traditionally the term referred to a guardian or keeper. It was used of traditional leaders such as headmen and chiefs when they visited the villages to check on the welfare of their subjects. The act of visitation was known as *Kulingula*. The ordained minister's role was differentiated from that of an unordained minister. The unordained minister was referred to as a licensed minister. This category included overseers (if not ordained African Ministers), evangelists, local preachers, teacher-pastors, deacons and deaconesses. The rest of the workers and members in the local church were considered to be lay members.<sup>44</sup>

Ordained ministers included both European missionaries and African ministers. There was a general expectation that only male workers were to be ordained. In particular, male medical doctors were ordained before arriving on the mission field.

Whereas it has been the opinion of the field over a long period of years that it is most advisable for all men missionaries to be ordained as ministers so that their services on the African field can be of the highest administrative, ecclesiastical, and religious function.<sup>45</sup>

According to Climenhaga, some medical doctors were ordained as ministers, based on the rationale that all missionary activity was to focus on the spiritual conversion of the unregenerate and the nurturing of their Christian lives. In a research interview conversation regarding a North American medical physician, Dr. Alvin Thuma said:

Well, he was a doctor. But he was given some Bible Study before he came out to be a missionary doctor. And then they ordained him. So that he was known as the Rev. Dr. Alvin Thuma.<sup>46</sup>

However, among the American missionaries, women were not ordained, although their work included spiritually focussed functions similar to that of some of the men. For example, Anna Engle as the main teacher in the Wanezi Bible Institute,

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<sup>43</sup> African Conference Minutes, 'Outline of Duties and Procedure, Article XI, 1944.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> African Conference Minutes, *Rationale for Ordaining Medical Doctors*, Article VIII, Item 4, 1950.

<sup>46</sup> A. Climenhaga, for General Superintendent, *Interview*, Grantham, PA, June 1999.

instructed and prepared all-male students for various spiritual ministry functions such as pastors and evangelists. She was never referred to as 'Reverend' or 'Umfundisi', but rather acquired the respectable title for older Sindebele women of *Nkosizana*.

Wanezi Bible Institute extended its services to other workers in the church including minister's wives, besides the specialised courses for the ordination of African Ministers. These included refresher courses and mobile Bible School sessions for other church workers.

Two students were enrolled in the Bible School, and a two weeks refresher course for evangelists was held in August with most of the evangelists from Northern and Southern Rhodesia present.<sup>47</sup>

Our evangelists conducted evangelistic services at each outstation. Their names were Mizinga, Mafulo, Kalaluka, and Jamu. This year two others, Chiseki and Simuunza helped while the regular evangelists went to Wanezi Bible School for the refresher course for Evangelists.<sup>48</sup>

Decided to hold a Retreat and Christian Leadership Course for all African ordained ministers and their wives at Wanezi Bible Institute January 16-18, 1964. Expenses of this retreat shall be met with funds taken from undesignated specials.<sup>49</sup>

Wanezi also conducted exclusive and specialised refresher courses away from the main campus of the school. These courses were conducted in the form of mobile training sessions in distant places such as Northern Rhodesia. Such in-service training catered for persons who could not afford to attend full residential courses. The forms of training were a priority for the field mission leadership and church leaders and were supported by the Executive Board.

Decided to have a Pastor's Refresher Course in Northern Rhodesia from August 19 to 23, 1964, to be conducted by Wanezi Bible Institute Staff. Venue and catering for the Refresher Course shall be arranged by Northern Rhodesia Church Executive Committee.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> A. Climenhaga, *Report of the Wanezi Outstations*, 1952.

<sup>48</sup> J. E. Hershey, *Macha Mission Report*, 1952.

<sup>49</sup> African Executive Board Minutes, *Ministers Retreat and Christian Leadership Course* 16-18, December 1963 Item XXXVI, *Ministers Retreat and Christian Leadership Course*.

<sup>50</sup> *African Conference Minutes*, Item XXXIX, 1963.

Decided that the Bible Institute Staff shall hold two weeks' Bible School Course at Choma Secondary School from August 17-27. Students of the course will be given credit for the work accomplished.<sup>51</sup>

Mobile training sessions served to equip both clergy and lay leaders of the Church. This increased the influence and impact of theological and Bible training among the indigenous people.

**5.3.5. Bible School Credentials and Ministerial Remuneration**

Theological and Bible education were highly valued in the development of spiritual leadership of the indigenous Church. The payment schedules accepted by the African Executive Board indicated that the more educated the minister was, the higher the level of remuneration was given to him. The nature of Christian service was another contributing factor to levels of remuneration.<sup>52</sup> The evangelists were paid more money in comparison to pastors. In part, the evangelists served on a seasonal basis when people were not cultivating or harvesting. They also received a bicycle allowance, which was conditional. The bicycle allowance was paid to evangelists only when a satisfactory bicycle was supplied by the individual evangelist to the superintendent.<sup>53</sup>

Description of Workers	Evangelists	Pastors
For a person without Bible School training	£3.00. per month, plus 10/ bicycle allowance	£2.10 per month
For person with vernacular Bible Course	£3.10 per month, plus 10/ bicycle allowance	£3.00 per month
For a person with middle Bible course	£4.00 per month, plus 10/ bicycle allowance	£3.10 per month
For a person with Theological Course	£6.10 per month, plus 10/ bicycle allowance	£6.00 per month

*Fig. # 1: Remuneration for Evangelists and Pastors*

Wages were closely connected to the educational qualifications. It must have been assumed that the more educated a person was the better equipped he was for ministry. However, the worker's ability and spiritual giftedness were not deliberately factored into the decision of wage earnings. The basis for the difference in the amount of wages given to evangelists and pastors was not clearly defined in the

<sup>51</sup> *Africa Executive Board Minutes*, May 17-19, 1965.

<sup>52</sup> *Africa Executive Board Minutes*, 11 June 1963.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

records. One probable reason would have been the itinerant nature of the work and the fact that the evangelism budget was directly funded by western missionary support.

#### **5.4 The Emergence of Indigenous Senior Church Leaders**

The emphasis on the need for highly and well-trained church workers was embraced by both field mission staff and the Foreign Mission Board in North America. In his Africa report of 1964, Brubaker, the former General Superintendent, made a persuasive recommendation, which was initially directed to the Foreign Mission Board.

There is need for a trained pastoral ministry in the African church of an educational level comparable to what is now common among young Christian laymen of the church. The Bible Institute, which is much in our thinking these days, is the most important project of the African Church. It is my sincere, deep conviction that the greatest need is not more money, and better facilities, important as these are, but more young men whose hearts God has touched with a burning passion for lost souls and a supreme love for Christ and the Church. May I repeat; the greatest need is for dedicated young men.<sup>54</sup>

In an effort to look forward to the growth and expansion of the church, the need for well-equipped and spiritually devoted leadership was indispensable. The establishment of Wanezi Bible Institute led to the further development of senior church leadership.

Unlike Southern Rhodesia, where overseers were appointed as early as 1930, Northern Rhodesia began to address the need for ordained senior church leaders at the beginning of 1950.<sup>55</sup> This was during the time of Climenhaga's appointment as General Superintendent and Bishop of Northern and Southern Rhodesia.

##### **5.4.1 Transition of Missionary Leadership and Indigenous Overseers**

After establishing the first Bible School at Wanezi Mission in 1948, Climenhaga was designated General Superintendent of the African mission field in 1950. His predecessor, Brubaker, had just requested that he be relieved of his duties during the same period. During the twenty-one years that Bishop Brubaker, (the predecessor to

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<sup>54</sup> H. H. Brubaker, *Evangelical Visitor*, December 7, 1964: 4.

<sup>55</sup> A. R. Engle, *There is No Difference*, 1950: 194.



Climenhaga), had served in Africa, the mission church had experienced both numerical and spiritual growth.<sup>56</sup>

The expansion of the church in the Rhodesias was evidenced by the large attendance at Climenhaga's ordination, at which Bishop Brubaker officiated.

At the first conference, Arthur Climenhaga was ordained as Bishop for Northern and Southern Rhodesia. Brubaker still acted as chair at the ordination service. There were 1369 people present at the Sunday morning communion service. About 835 communicants took part. This was the largest ever attendance for a communion service in Africa at the time.<sup>57</sup>

The Foreign Mission Report carried a similar account that emphasised the transition of mission field leadership from Brubaker to Climenhaga. The change of leadership was well received on both sides of the Atlantic. The American Church, having initiated the appointment through the Foreign Mission Board, was affirmative of the new leadership. The church in Africa accepted the Foreign Mission Board's decision and welcomed the new leaders.

The African Conference, which was held in the month of August, 1950, was a season of blessing to the African church. At this time, Bishop Brubaker ordained Arthur M. Climenhaga to the Office of Bishop as his successor to serve as superintendent of the African Mission work.<sup>58</sup>

It was critical for the outgoing superintendent to affirm his successor. The affirmation of the new leader was an act of empowerment and assurance to the missionaries and the indigenous believers. In expressing the confidence vested in the new field mission leader, Brubaker said:

As we hand over responsibilities to Brother Climenhaga we are confident that God will be his guide and support. Our brother has shown himself worthy of the trust the church has shown in him.<sup>59</sup>

The Foreign Mission Board directly appointed Climenhaga. At this early stage of the growth of the church, Africans played no significant role in his selection. The

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<sup>56</sup> J. N. Hostetter, Editorial, *Evangelical Visitor*, General Conference in Review, 26 June, 1950: 3.

<sup>57</sup> *Africa Conference Minutes*, 1950.

<sup>58</sup> *Foreign Mission Board Report*, 1951: 8.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

description of the church on the African mission field as the African Church at this was not accurate stage of development. Firstly, it was the Foreign Mission Board in North America, which appointed the leaders of the Church, as opposed to the indigenous believers in Africa. Secondly, missionaries predominantly held most of the senior leadership positions. Also the indigenous Christians were still looking to the Foreign Mission Board and the American missionaries for leadership. It can therefore be argued that 'the African Church' in the early 1950s had not yet acquired an African identity. It would have been more appropriately referred to as the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa as opposed to the African Church, as quoted above.

Climenhaga was credited not only with the establishment of the first Bible School, but also with the appointment of the first two senior church leaders in Northern Rhodesia. During an early visit to Northern Rhodesia in 1951, indigenous Church leaders requested him to address the need for senior church leaders.

Emerging from all three-business sessions in council was the pressing need for the development of church administration in Northern Rhodesia with particular reflection to the election of Overseers for the Northern Rhodesian Church work. This question was referred to the Executive Board and all the missionary brethren with the thought that the forward move could possibly be effected in this direction in 1952.<sup>60</sup>

The change of mission leadership in 1950 thus eventually paved the way for a fully commissioned indigenous church leadership. The appointment of a new Bishop and General Superintendent was a prelude to the emergence of overseers in Northern Rhodesia. Brubaker had earlier applied to go on furlough. In response, the Foreign Mission Board granted him permission with the subsequent appointment of Climenhaga to act as General Superintendent in his absence.

The board has chosen Brother Arthur Climenhaga to work as your assistant while you come home on furlough, or take your place as General Superintendent in case you do not return.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> *Africa Council Report*, 1951: 76.

<sup>61</sup> G. Wolgemuth, Secretary, *Letter* Foreign Mission Board to H. H. Brubaker, General Superintendent, Mt. Joy, PA. January 9, 1950.

Subsequent to their furlough, the Brubakers had decided to stay on in North America for their retirement. Climenhaga was then fully appointed to the position of General Superintendent in 1950 for the Africa Mission Board. Climenhaga later described the events that culminated in his significant selection by the Foreign Mission Board. The final piece of correspondence was a cablegram sent to him while at Wanezi Mission where he served as Principal of the Bible Institute. In his memoirs, Climenhaga wrote:

Then I walked in and told Arlene and Martha Kauffman “The cablegram said that I am elected by General Conference in North America to be the next Bishop and General Superintendent of the Africa field when Brother Brubaker goes home on furlough.”<sup>62</sup>

Brother Brubaker had already hinted to the Foreign Mission Board that he was considering retiring from work in Africa so that his two children could attend school in America. Brubaker affirmed Climenhaga’s choice as Bishop and Superintendent of the African Mission work by encouraging him to accept the appointment.

The dialogue between Brubaker and Climenhaga was significant because of the nature of the appointment process adopted by the Foreign Mission Board. In the 1950s, the Foreign Mission Board gave directives directly to the missionaries on the field. Thus, the senior mission leadership was under the jurisdiction of the Foreign Mission Board in North America. Consequently, Climenhaga recalled that he was not consulted prior to this appointment:

I hadn’t even been asked if I would do it; I was just told, You are it! As it sort of struck me that, that might be the way the Lord was speaking to me and that was the answer to any other kind of rumours I’d been hearing and that this was the course set.<sup>63</sup>

Climenhaga remembered being frightened at the realisation of the weight of leadership responsibility conferred on him. He described his inner struggle as follows:

But I can remember that I was expending my energy there, this whole thing was weighing on me and I began to pray and say, ‘Lord, why did it have to be

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<sup>62</sup> Arthur Climenhaga *Memoirs* 1999: 188

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

me? Why didn't Amos Ginder live? If he would have lived, he could have become Bishop. Then I could have thought about the possibility of some other kind of activity in your vineyard and service. Now I didn't say it like Jeremiah, 'cursed be the day of my birth,' but I must admit it was a heavy pressure. The Lord just spoke to me very clearly there that it was his will and that that was the way to go. I was glad for that experience because it was a balancing experience in some of the experiences that came in the days ahead.<sup>64</sup>

Both the Foreign Mission Board and Brubaker affirmed the value of Climenhaga's experience. The Mission Board not only resolved to appoint Climenhaga as Bishop, but they decided that Brother Brubaker would conduct the ordination ceremony. Brubaker's participation in the ordination of his successor was an act of public affirmation and would have dispelled anyone with misgivings on the selection of the new field leader.

Resolved the ordination of Brother Climenhaga to the Office of Bishop to assume this leadership shall be performed by the retiring Superintendent of the Africa work on the field and in the presence of the African Church. Arrangements for said ordination to be completed on the field.

Whereas, it is the unanimous feeling of the board that the services of the retiring superintendent of the African work have been very commendable and the sacrifices and labours expended have been richly blessed of the Lord.<sup>65</sup>

With the ordination ceremony successfully completed, Climenhaga embarked on the new role of leading both missionaries and African church leaders. One of the peculiar responsibilities of the General Superintendent was officiating at the regional District Council Meetings which were held annually.

Climenhaga's first district council meeting was held at an outstation in the Macha Mission area in 1951. This was a stage in the evolution process of African Overseers in Northern Rhodesia. One of the emerging African leaders in attendance at the council meeting was Sampson Mudenda, who was at the time a Head Teacher at one of the outstation schools. During district council meetings, questions for discussion

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Foreign Mission Board documents *'Regarding Superintendent for Mission Work in Africa'* File: History, MSS. HSS. 13.4.1.3, Messiah College Archives.

were presented to the General Superintendent. One of the questions that was put to Climenhaga by Mudenda was:

When Bishop Brubaker was in charge, we would ask for an Overseer in Northern Rhodesia, and he would tell us that when we are grown up and are ready, one would be chosen. We are asking you as Mufundisi Mupati (which was their word in Tonga for General Superintendent); 'When do you think we will be ready?'<sup>66</sup>

Writing in his memoirs, Climenhaga thought that the question was asked in a rather truculent mood. Climenhaga also noted that Brother Brubaker for reasons not disclosed in the memoirs, had seemed reluctant and, or had at best ignored the task of appointing Africans to the position of Overseer in Northern Rhodesia.<sup>67</sup> In contrast, Brubaker had appointed African Overseers in Southern Rhodesia's Brethren in Christ Church among the Ndebele people in 1930, who were later ordained to the ministry in 1944.<sup>68</sup> The inconsistency might explain Mudenda's truculence during the meeting.

It wasn't until 1951 when the poignant question regarding the appointment of overseers was asked, and Climenhaga's response to the question was, "You can have an overseer whenever you are ready for one."<sup>69</sup>

Such a response was arguably a pleasant surprise to the African council members. According to Climenhaga, Sampson Mudenda, the originator of the question, who seemed ready for a debate, calmly accepted the superintendent's response.

The seemingly affirmative response revealed elements of the process used in the appointment of African church leaders. It is probable deducing from the above quoted conversation, that leadership was achieved by the Africans themselves and not merely granted by mission leadership when it came to the indigenous church leaders. This was suggested by the question originating from an indigenous inquirer who was clearly pushing for change. The fact that the question was raised by a young and educated indigenous person also suggests that there must have been two types of

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<sup>66</sup> A. Climenhaga, *Memoirs*, 1999: 195.

<sup>67</sup> A. Climenhaga *Memoirs*, 1999: 195. Note that Climenhaga does not give the specific reasons for this opinion of Brubaker.

<sup>68</sup> Significant Events of Fifty Years in Rhodesia, *Evangelical Visitor*, August 23, 1948: 10.

<sup>69</sup> Arthur Climenhaga *Memoirs*, 1999: 195.

African Christians. There were on the one hand those of the older generation who were less educated and more compliant, and there was on the other hand, the enlightened younger generation who raised concern for the seemingly delayed appointment of indigenous Christians to senior church roles.

The apparent variance in response by the two Superintendents also revealed two differing perceptions of the African leadership in Northern Rhodesia among the missionaries. At the time, one of the on-going underlying factors contributing to this difference between Climenhaga and Brubaker was the early inception of the mission in Southern Rhodesia in 1898, in comparison to Northern Rhodesia where the work started in 1906. The mission work in the south was well established and thus provided a reservoir of emerging African church leaders. However, as well as the twenty-year gap between appointments of overseers in the two regions, other factors also contributed to the different perceptions towards indigenous leadership in Northern and Southern Rhodesia.

The earlier establishment of indigenous leadership in the Brethren in Christ mission work in Southern Rhodesia is also related to different styles of traditional and leadership orientation from one African culture to another. In the south, the Ndebele were a strong militant group with a more centralised organisation than the Tonga people in the north, who were more agrarian.<sup>70</sup> The Ndebele had strong and long heritage of traditional rulers, whereas, the Tonga people did not have a major unifying leader, such as a paramount chief. For example, Kumalo, a grandson to King Mzilikazi was one of the first three overseers in the Brethren in Christ Church in Southern Rhodesia.<sup>71</sup> His family connections to such notable traditional leadership could have had a significant influence on the early appointment of indigenous leaders in the south. While the leadership traits found in traditional and Christian leaders were not necessarily the same, their impact and influence on each other could have been significant.

Another contributing factor was the fact that the location of Brethren in Christ mission headquarters were based at Matopo Mission in Southern Rhodesia. As a

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<sup>70</sup> T. J. Thompson, *The Presbyterians in Malawi*, in J. Weller and J. Linden, *Main Stream Christianity*, Mambo Press, Gweru, 1984, p. 113. Thompson makes a similar comparison regarding the Ndebele in relation to the upsurge of interest in Christianity in the region.

<sup>71</sup> A. R. Engle, *There is No Difference*, 1950: 184.



result, the General Superintendent managed the work in the north at a distance, and therefore did not supervise or observe potential Tonga church leaders to the same extent as the Ndebele Christians. This factor helps to account for the general feeling among indigenous Christians in the north, that the Brethren in Christ were not supporting the development of African leadership from amongst the Tonga, as expressed in Mudenda's question at the Macha District meeting in 1950.<sup>72</sup>

Despite Brubaker's reluctance to appoint local leadership, Tonga church leaders were in fact proving to be capable. Peter Munsaka was long recognised and affirmed by missionaries as 'a faithful worker, being referred to in the missionary reports and correspondence as the faithful African leader.'<sup>73</sup> In 1931, he accompanied Myron Taylor, founder of Sikalongo Mission as an evangelist on his fatal Valley Tour, during which Taylor was killed by a lion. His spiritual maturity was widely accepted among the missionary leaders. Therefore, his potential as a leader was similar to the three older men appointed as overseers in the south who had had an equally limited formal education. This is evidenced by the following description of one of the three Ndebele Christian leaders:

The junior overseer and minister is Rev. Ndabenduku Dhlohdhlo. He is a man possibly fifty or fifty-five years of age. His father was a Lindebele chief under King Lobengula. He himself would have been a chief had he not declined. He chose rather to follow the chief shepherd of souls and lead men and women into His fold.<sup>74</sup>

Another example of a potential Tonga church leader was Sampson Mudenda. He demonstrated capability of senior church leadership. He had both academic and experiential merits. Mudenda graduated from Matopo Teachers Training College in 1943 and became headmaster of one of the out-schools near Macha Mission station, also taking the religious role of a teacher-pastor.<sup>75</sup>

Church leaders in Northern Rhodesia expressed concern that the appointment of indigenous overseers was being delayed. This was indicated by the resolution of the

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<sup>72</sup> A. Climenhaga, *Memoirs*, 1999: 195.

<sup>73</sup> G. Brubaker, Pray For These Leaders, *Evangelical Visitor*, June 1955: 10.

<sup>74</sup> A. R. Engle, *There is No Difference*, 1950: 193.

<sup>75</sup> E. Switzer, *Evangelical Visitor*, January 4, 1954: 7.

Africa Executive Board of 1951, which revealed the anxiety of Africans who met at Macha Mission station, regarding the matter of indigenous overseers.

The issue of an overseer for Northern Rhodesia was presented to all district councils in Northern Rhodesia in August. A strong desire was expressed to have an overseer for Northern Rhodesia. Decision was made to bring the matter to the next board meeting.<sup>76</sup>

After establishing the need for overseers in Northern Rhodesia, the Africa mission leadership began to argue the case for the process of selecting the senior indigenous church leaders.

The African [General] Conference convened at Macha in May. The Bible Sessions were very inspiring and the sermon by Bishop Climenhaga on 'Qualifications for an Overseer' was very searching. The main item of business was the election of overseers in Northern Rhodesia. The church in Northern Rhodesia has realised the need for overseers for several years and we believe this was God's appointed time.<sup>77</sup>

The Africa General Conference of 1952 was the highest decision-making body of the Brethren in Christ Churches in Northern and Southern Rhodesia and was also an opportunity for both members to join together in worship and fellowship. The conference attracted large numbers of delegates from both the Northern and Southern Rhodesia regions. Although church members took an active role in the election of senior church leaders, as was demonstrated by the selection procedure, it was the Conference Executive Committee that facilitated the final decision in electing overseers. The Committee was composed of ordained missionaries, African ministers, and church executive members from both regions. The General Superintendent chaired all related decision making meetings.<sup>78</sup>

During the conference, the Bible sessions provided the spiritual formation of the fellowship. In the 1952 conference, the focus of Bible teaching was on the appropriate qualifications for church leaders. Such an emphasis on biblical requirements reveals the place and role of the Bible in the Brethren in Christ Mission

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<sup>76</sup> *Africa Executive Board Minutes*, August 28, 1951, See also Africa Executive Board, January 14-17, 1952, Item XXVIII and XXIX.

<sup>77</sup> Macha Mission Report, *Conference and Overseers*, 1952.

<sup>78</sup> See Appendix; Organization Church.

work. However, the particular biblical criteria used to determine the suitability of individual candidates to the office of overseer was not clearly outlined in the available archival sources. This contrasted with the clear stipulations, which governed regulations for the ordination of African ministers.<sup>79</sup>

#### 5.4.2 Overseers and the Selection Process

The Africa Conference started on Friday, May 23, in the Macha Church. The Conference Minutes indicate that the procedure for the election of overseers started with a biblical address in which the qualifications and responsibilities were presented.<sup>80</sup> The subsequent stages of the election process, which included nomination and a final appointment of candidates, were as follows:

After discussing the method to be used in choosing the overseers, it was decided to take a preliminary vote for nominees and then present the highest names, if they measure up to biblical standards, for a final vote. The preliminary vote was taken for Macha Overseer, and resulted in three names being brought forward namely, Apuleni Moono, Simon Mudenda, and Sampson Mudenda. After this, the preliminary vote for Sikalongo resulted in the names of Jonathan Muleya and Peter Munsaka being brought forward as nominees.<sup>81</sup>

The church met again on Saturday morning to take a final vote, which resulted in the choice of Sampson Mudenda as overseer for Macha area and Peter Munsaka for Sikalongo area. It was decided that the official title for overseer in Northern Rhodesia was *milinguzi*.<sup>82</sup>

The process of selecting different overseers for the two regions of Northern Rhodesia highlighted the importance of local identity. The two regions represented two major clans, namely the Mudenda clan in Macha, and the Munsaka clan in Sikalongo. Although the two men emerged through the ranks to become the first senior indigenous church leaders, they also represented their clans. Both clans confidently lay claim to their affiliation with the church without any measure of being marginalised by the other clan. Therefore, the appointment of overseers from both clans affirmed the identity of each clan and the equality with each other. Thus, both

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<sup>79</sup> Africa Conference Minutes 1944, article XI, 'Regulations Concerning African Ministers'.

<sup>80</sup> Africa Conference Minutes, *Macha Mission*, May 28-2 June, 1952.

<sup>81</sup> African Church Conference Minutes, May 28-2 June Item 4.

<sup>82</sup> African Church Conference Minutes, May 28-2 June Item 5.

the Mudenda and Munsaka clans had equal claim to leadership status and affiliation to the Church.

As the first overseers in Northern Rhodesia, the leadership profiles of Munsaka and Mudenda also differed. Apart from emerging from different clans their leadership formation varied in several ways. Primarily, two factors distinguished the immediate profile, namely age and education.

Traditionally, Tonga people put great emphasis on age, which was associated with experience and wisdom. On the one hand, Munsaka was an older man who was constantly described with reference to his age and long experience at the mission station.<sup>83</sup> On the other hand, Mudenda was constantly referred to as an educated young man. He certainly was not a novice because he had been headteacher and had taken the teacher-pastor role prior to his appointment as overseer.<sup>84</sup>

However, Munsaka and Mudenda held in common the characteristic that they were spiritual leaders affirmed by both the missionaries and the indigenous Christians. The endorsement of African church leadership was well demonstrated in the General Superintendent's annual report.

In thinking of African staff, probably the most significant event of 1952 was the election at the May African General Conference of two new overseers for the Northern Rhodesian section of the Brethren in Christ Church. A young man, Sampson Mudenda was chosen for the Macha area and for the Sikalongo area, an older brother, Peter Munsaka, long known as Deacon Peter, was elected.<sup>85</sup>

The momentous General Conference of 1952 therefore resulted in the selection of these two significant indigenous church leaders. Their appointment was symbolic in that it ushered in the era that would lead to the nationalisation of church leadership in the Brethren in Christ church in Northern Rhodesia.

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<sup>83</sup> D. Climenhaga, 'Help us to Pray', *Evangelical Visitor* October 13, 1952.

<sup>84</sup> J. E Hershey, *Macha Mission Annual Report*, 1952.

<sup>85</sup> A. Climenhaga, *Africa General Report*, 1952: 16.

### 5.4.3 Overseers and their Ministry Role

The contribution of the newly appointed overseers to the mission work of the Brethren in Christ and the development of the church in Northern Rhodesia were highly significant. Recounting their lives indicates that their ministry marked a watershed in the development of indigenous leadership.

Munsaka, generally known as Deacon Peter for his long service as deacon at Sikalongo Mission, left a legacy of acknowledged faithful service. This was acknowledged by Dorcas, the wife of David Climenhaga, as she shared the outcome of the overseers' elections to the North American Brethren in Christ church. She wrote:

Our newly appointed overseer is a testimony to God's saving and keeping power. Those who know the African work, automatically think of Peter when they think of Sikalongo. For almost thirty years, he has been here. He is always busy. For many years, he was a deacon, now he is an overseer. Missionaries have come and gone, but Peter remains. Many, many times he is called upon to solve problems, to pray for the sick or the discouraged, to give words of comfort and hope. His wife is a faithful helper. Now he cycles from one school to another, going constantly and giving of his energy. He needs your prayers.<sup>86</sup>

Despite his limited education, the selection of Munsaka to the office of overseer was vital, based on the relevance of his previous work in the mission and church. The significance of his role was further demonstrated when in Northern Rhodesia the vacancy for Sikalongo deacon created by the election of Munsaka as overseer was filled by appointing two young men as deacons for the same area. That development was indicative of a marked expansion in the Sikalongo work. It was the first time that the growth of the work warranted a division of the district into two diaconates.<sup>87</sup>

The primary responsibility of overseers was the administrative oversight of the given district. This was highlighted by the General Superintendent's reference to overseers as church administrators, in his keynote address to conference in 1952.<sup>88</sup> However, Munsaka did not confine his role to church administration. A brief report by the regional mission superintendent, David Climenhaga who was the brother of Arthur

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<sup>86</sup> D. Climenhaga, 'Help us Pray' *Evangelical Visitor*, October 13, 1952: 11.

<sup>87</sup> A. Climenhaga, *Africa General Report*, 1952: 17.

<sup>88</sup> 'Our African Conference', *Evangelical Visitor*, July 21, 1952: 11.

Climenhaga, the General Superintendent, demonstrated that Munsaka was also an ardent field worker.

Evangelists Mafula from Macha, Jamu Muleya from Sikalongo and our newly elected overseer Peter Munsaka held revival meetings at the different schools. Our overseer Peter Munsaka has been out in the villages and at the schools, visiting, and encouraging, as he is needed. Pray for him too. He is doing an important work, and one that should tell for eternity.”<sup>89</sup>

To further equip the overseers with administrative skills and theological knowledge after their appointment, they were expected to attend specialised courses at Wanezi Bible Institute. In Munsaka’s case, his long diaconate service supplemented apparent educational deficiency. In the event of Munsaka’s absence from the Sikalongo mission area, arrangement was made for the deacons to deputise in his absence, and assist where necessary in the overseer’s duties.<sup>90</sup>

As the church on the African field grew and Munsaka’s sphere of work expanded, the need for his ordination was recognised by mission leaders. It became imperative for Munsaka to be ordained in order that he might have the authority to conduct the ordinances of the church for its members such as baptisms, weddings, and Holy Communion. The authority and influence of the unordained overseers were limited without ordination. The performance of church ordinances was exclusively the prerogative of ordained ministers. At this stage of the development of the church in Northern Rhodesia, there were no African ordained ministers.<sup>91</sup> Prior to the ordination of African overseers, the General Superintendent carried the load of all ordinances mentioned above.

The ordination procedure included presentation of candidates to the Ministerial and Examining Board. The Board comprised male missionary ministers, who had followed the normal procedure of ordination before leaving for the African Mission Field.<sup>92</sup> To receive ordination, the Board required fulfilment of needed theological education. The Board recognised the different areas of educational requirements, which were necessary for ministerial services in North America and Africa. The level

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<sup>89</sup> D. E. Climenhaga, *Sikalongo Outstation General Report*, 1952: 47.

<sup>90</sup> *Africa Executive Board Minutes*, 11 January 1955, item XXIV.

<sup>91</sup> Africa Conference Minutes, Article XI, *Regulations Concerning African Ministers*, 1944.

<sup>92</sup> Africa Missionary Conference Minutes, ‘*Ordination for Overseers*,’ December 7-9, 1955.



of adequate qualifications for ordination for African ministers was negotiated with the Ministerial Credentials Board. Therefore, in the case of Munsaka, the Board stipulated that he complete a course, which was organised for mature African church leaders.

Overseer Munsaka has been a standby in the work at Sikalongo Mission for twenty-five years. The 'Peter' many of you have heard about is down in Southern Rhodesia at the Wanezi Bible School for six weeks of study.<sup>93</sup>

In addition to spiritual maturity and experience, both Munsaka and Mudenda carried the burden of pioneering African overseers in Northern Rhodesia. Frank Kipe, the Superintendent of Outstation work, alluded to the overseers' task in his annual report.

The schools continue to be the centre of village church life. Overseers Peter Munsaka and Sampson Mudenda feel a deep responsibility and carry a sharper burden than we missionaries can feel or understand. Their task to lead the church is a difficult one. A lot depends on them. They have requested our prayers and sincerely need them.<sup>94</sup>

From his appointment as overseer, missionary description of Mudenda revealed a slight differentiation from Munsaka's leadership development. While Munsaka was described as an old and spiritually mature minister, Hershey, Superintendent of Macha Mission Station, described Mudenda during his appointment as overseer, in the following way:

The main item of business was the election of overseers in Northern Rhodesia. Sampson Mudenda was elected for the Macha area. He is a young trained teacher with a trained wife and children.<sup>95</sup>

Mudenda was a trained teacher, and a graduate of the mission's first teaching institution, Matopo Teachers Institute, in 1943. He was a primary school teacher prior to assuming the role of overseer for Macha area.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> G. Brubaker, Pray For these Leaders, *Evangelical Visitor*, June, 1955.

<sup>94</sup> H. Frank Kipe, *Nahumba Mission Report*, 1956: 24.

<sup>95</sup> J. E. Hershey, *Macha Mission Report*, 1952: 23.

<sup>96</sup> E Switzer, , 'Musings from the classroom', *Evangelical Visitor*, 4 January, 1954: 7.

Mudenda's work as overseer also extended beyond his administrative role. His preaching and teaching abilities were also evident. Those seemed to have been his primary gifts and means of ministry.

Two revivals were held, one by overseer Mudenda and the other by Rev. Alvin Book. In both, there was excellent response.<sup>97</sup>

Responsibilities of overseers included chairing the annual district councils, with missionaries present as advisors. The missionary counsellor was a representative of the General Superintendent.<sup>98</sup> It is questionable whether the presence of a missionary was required to advise the overseer, since the overseer had direct access to the General Superintendent for advice and counsel. This points to the likelihood that the missionary attended meeting to maintain control of church related activities and decision-making process.

Overseer Mudenda was also required to fulfil the theological education stipulation. Mudenda's keen desire for education made it easier for him to fulfil this condition; Brubaker reported on one of the several training courses Mudenda attended.

Overseer Mudenda (Macha Mission), a promising young man, a trained teacher has left for the Union of South Africa where he has entered a Bible School for a three years' course, at the conclusion of which, it is expected he will be ordained.<sup>99</sup>

The ordination of both Munsaka and Mudenda coincided with the Jubilee Conference in Northern Rhodesia. The Jubilee celebrations were a commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Brethren in Christ work at Macha Mission. Little did those two intrepid ladies, Frances Davidson and Adda Engle Taylor realise what they were establishing when they drove on ox- drawn transport into the Tongaland of Northern Rhodesia in 1906. Fifty years later, there were three mission stations. These three stations were founded as follows Macha (1906), Sikalongo (1916), and Nahumba founded in 1953, with eighteen missionaries and two ordained ministers.

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<sup>97</sup> J. E. Hershey, *Macha Report*, 1952: 72.

<sup>98</sup> A Climenhaga, *Survey of Mission Work in Africa*, 1955.

<sup>99</sup> G. Brubaker, 'Pray for these Leaders', *Evangelical Visitor*, June 6, 1955: 10.

<sup>100</sup> A. Climenhaga, *Survey of Mission Work in Africa*, 1956: 11.

While the year 1956 had been remembered in the history of Macha Mission as the fifty-year Jubilee celebration of Brethren in Christ missionary endeavour in Northern Rhodesia, it was, however, the ordination of the first Tonga church leaders that took precedence. Climenhaga reported the notable place of the ordination ceremony.

The outstanding [feature] of Jubilee day was the ordination of our first two African ministers in Northern Rhodesia. God's presence moved in the ordination service as these two couples took solemn vows and declared their consecration to the work among their people. God bless Mfundisi Peter Munsaka and Mfundisi Sampson Mudenda.<sup>101</sup>

Jesse Lady, who had succeeded Climenhaga as principal of Wanezi Bible Institute, in delivering the main address during the ordination service on 17<sup>th</sup> August, 1956 stated in his opening remarks:

There is added significance to this ordination of our brethren, in that it marks fifty years of Christian service at the Macha Mission. In the spirit of our predecessors who pioneered this work, we have gathered today to ordain these brethren who, we believe, will continue to give competent leadership to the church of tomorrow. We naturally turn to the Word of God for a message of this hour.<sup>102</sup>

The address was followed by the ordination ritual during which Bishop Climenhaga gave the charge to the ordinands and to the congregation to support the work of the church by prayer and offerings. Climenhaga's charge underscored the fact that overseers were not leading in a vacuum, but rather surrounded by followers with responsibilities vital to their leadership success.

Overseers Munsaka and Mudenda became representatives of the African members of the church in Northern Rhodesia. The overseers attended their first Northern Rhodesia church executive committee in 1957. The meeting was attended by three missionaries, two overseers, three deacons, one evangelist, and two teachers. The church executive committee was the highest administrative decision-making body for the region and was chaired by the General Superintendent. The committee had

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<sup>101</sup> A. Climenhaga, *Survey of Mission Work in Africa*, 1956: 20.

<sup>102</sup> J. Lady, Sermon: 'O Man of God', *Evangelical Visitor*, 3 December, 1956.

authority over district councils, which were led by overseers. One of the primary responsibilities of the committee was to consider the pace of nationalisation of the church and take matters formerly considered by the missionary executive board.<sup>103</sup> By so doing, the overseers were influencing the Brethren in Christ church towards the Africanisation of the church

While the role of overseers was significant, the missionary leadership had greater authority and influence. The committee was dominated by the voices and influence of the missionary leaders. Missionaries were engaging in decision-making at every level of leadership, either in an advisory role or in chairing the committee.<sup>104</sup>

Nonetheless, the ordination of the overseers added dignity to the growing church in Northern Rhodesia. They had now been given the stamp of authority and influence in the church in Africa. The overseers' ability to officiate at major church rituals and to serve on all decision-making bodies enhanced the African identity of the church and its leadership.

After ordination, the overseers continued to contribute to the on-going growth of the church through theological reflection. Two areas of importance to ministry in the African context prompted the overseers' response and input, namely the 'Father's Institution' and the 'Christian attitude to wailing'.

Munsaka was the one who contributed to the theological reflection on the subject of 'Father's Institution'. In the minutes of the Africa conference of 1958 it was stated:

The Rev. Peter Munsaka sponsored this question to the conference and he pointed out that fathers should sit together and discuss some mutual problems in order to be able to bring up the Christian families in these changing times. It was recommended that the church executive committee would have to arrange and work out some ways by which these meetings will be a success.<sup>105</sup>

In sponsoring this question, Munsaka was interacting between the inter-face of African cultural mores and Christian family values. It was equally significant that the

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<sup>103</sup> A. Climenhaga, *Survey of Mission Work: Africa*, 1955.

<sup>104</sup> Appendix: *Leadership Organization Structure*.

<sup>105</sup> Minutes of the African Church Conference, 'The Father's Institution', April 5, 1958, Item III.

question originated from a senior African leader who was aware of the traditional contextual factors that influenced the father's role in the family. In the Tonga culture, like most African traditions, parenting was the mother's primary responsibility. Therefore, his question was evidence of reflection on the issue of a Christian father's role in parenting, and an answer different from some of the prevailing traditional practices.

Mudenda was reported to have raised the question regarding the 'Christian attitude to wailing.'

This question was sponsored at the General Conference by Rev. S. M. Mudenda and he pointed out some of the bad custom of heathen wailing which are being introduced by some tribes. Particularly the custom of the Baila people who when one dies men take off their shirts and women take off their blouses to express their deep sorrows. Rev. Mudenda wondered why Christians also imitate such typical heathen custom as St. Paul clearly points out in 1 Thessalonians 4:13. All members expressed their views and agreed that Christians should behave differently from the heathen people and if any one was found doing it, he must be reminded to stop. A very strong vote was given by the conference members.<sup>106</sup>

Mudenda's reflection on Tonga traditional practices also points to an awareness of the impact of contextualising factors on the Christianization process. Mudenda's reference to and reflection on biblical expectations demonstrated the ability of African church leaders' interaction with their own traditional practices. Although such accounts of theology are the exception in the archival records, they point to the relevance and indispensability of Africans to the indigenization process of the Christian faith among the Tonga.

Mudenda had the unusual privilege of being married to an educated wife who was also involved in the ministry of the church. Mrs. Mudenda's work was primarily in relation to the women of the church, especially through a teaching ministry, as acknowledged in the Superintendent's report of Macha Mission Station regarding women's work.

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<sup>106</sup> Minutes of the African Church Conference, *'Item III Questions for the Business Meeting, 5 April, 1958.*

Sister Stern's women's work has progressed in spite of frequent feelings that many are still unchanged. In comparing the beginners and the advanced class, definite worth of work can be seen. Mrs. Mudenda, wife of Rev. Mudenda, has contributed greatly to these meetings with her lectures on the women's place in the home and community. This is a wonderful contact in touching the lives of women, who would not otherwise receive such personal touch.<sup>107</sup>

Mudenda's wife had the rare privilege of attending Bible School with her husband at a period in time when most African women were relegated to managing the home.

Even though it is the first year of the two-year course, it was possible to graduate one of the students, because he had transferred credits from the Union Bible Institute at Sweetwaters in South Africa, Mfundisi Sampson Mudenda. He was ordained to the ministry at the time of the Jubilee Conference at Macha in August. Mrs. Mudenda with two of their children also spent the school year at Wanezi and took several Bible courses.<sup>108</sup>

At graduation, Mudenda contributed a book to the Wanezi Library Collection after completing an advanced theological course. The impact of that gesture was underscored by the Principal's statement.

After the graduation message, the first graduate was awarded the certificate, to which he responded with words of thanks and a gift to the library of the Bible Institute, a book entitled "How to Win Souls." In this gift is reflected Mfundisi Mudenda's keen interest in the evangelism of his people. Our prayers and interest shall follow him and his faithful companion as they return to their place of leadership and of oversight of the work in the Macha district.<sup>109</sup>

While serving as overseer, Mudenda continued his theological training. On Mudenda's return from Bible school to Macha, both Climenhaga and Kipe offered their commendations:

We are happy to have the Sampson Mudendas home from Bible School for keeps. Their lives have been a challenge. Devotion to the Lord and to the cause of Christ shines from them as they seek to show their own people a better way. They need your prayers very keenly for theirs is not an easy task when surrounded by so many with ingrained superstition.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> I. Stern, *Macha Mission Report*, 1958: 80.

<sup>108</sup> A. Climenhaga, 'First Commencement,' Wanezi Bible Institute, *Evangelical Visitor*, February 25, 1957: 6.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> A. Climenhaga, *Survey of Mission Work: Africa*, 1956: 21.



We have been without the help of Mufundisi Mudenda for part of this year as he was completing his Bible course at Wanezi Bible Institute. But he came back to his work with a heart stirring vision of the need of his people and holiness.<sup>111</sup>

Mudenda was an example of a re-trained teacher- pastor, who was able to devote all his time to pastoral work rather than the previous arrangement of straddling between weekdays of secular teaching and weekend spiritual work. Climenhaga described Mudenda's task ahead of him as formidable due to the spiritual state of the Tonga people. Climenhaga's perception as indicated in the above quotations, seemed to denote that Tonga culture was inherently depraved therefore suggesting that Mudenda would show them a better way in Christian religion. Such negative assertions regarding Tonga culture by some of the Brethren in Christ missionaries hindered them from describing the positive elements of the culture. This tendency impeded the proper interface of Christianity and Tonga culture. Therefore, the task of contextualising Christianity to Tonga culture remained the responsibility of the emerging African leaders such as Mudenda and Munsaka who had already begun raising pertinent questions regarding their own culture. The indispensable role of the Tonga church leaders was evident though the process of their emergence was slow.

### **5.5 Summary and Conclusion**

By the end of the 1950s, a church development programme was well established in Northern Rhodesia similar to that of the Brethren in Christ in Southern Rhodesia. The reality of a viable pastoral church ministry was beginning to be achieved by the realisation that the educational strategy of establishing schools as a means of Christian witness, though successful itself, was deficient in the setting up of an effective church ministry. The missionary leadership resolved in 1947 to introduce Bible School training aimed at equipping men for church work, and the outcome was the establishment of Wanezi Bible School in 1948.

Wanezi Bible School, which later changed its name in 1956 to Wanezi Bible Institute, began in 1948 with four students coming from both regions of the Brethren in Christ mission field in Africa. The immediate effect of the Bible School was an improvement in the academic preparation of African church workers. This

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<sup>111</sup> H. Frank Kipe, *Nahumba Mission Report*, 1956: 25.

foundation led to the appointment of senior church leaders from amongst the indigenous Christians. The evidence considered in this chapter shows that the first African graduates of Wanezi Bible School appointed to senior leadership began to effectively relate Christianity to their own culture as exemplified by both Munsaka and Mudenda. However, in the first decade of Bible training, the programme was devoid of courses addressing African contextual subjects. The teaching staff continued to be western missionaries who laboured to learn the local language. The earliest curriculum in Bible training was transplanted from the North American church. This presupposed that they were answering similar theological questions in Northern Rhodesia as those encountered in North America.

An important result of the Bible training initiative was the emergence of theologically educated African clergy. As the church in Africa grew, African Christians became anxious to see their own clergy leading the church. This was epitomised by the key question by Sampson Mudenda, "When are we going to be ready to lead ourselves?" That this question originated from an African presupposed a delayed process of leadership empowerment by the American missionaries.

It was evident that the North American missionaries rather than the indigenous Christians had the authority and power to sanction church leadership appointments. The power to direct the course of church leadership was inherently possessed by the missionaries who were the purveyors of the new Christian religion. This was further evidenced by two varying perspectives from the two General Superintendents of the time. It was Climenhaga's positive affirmation of the readiness of Africans, and his willingness for them to choose indigenous leaders among themselves that hastened the nationalisation process of the church leadership in Northern Rhodesia.

The nationalisation process was later to be fulfilled by the election of the most senior church position, that of the Bishop. The next chapter focuses on the election of the first Zambian Bishop.

## CHAPTER 6

### ***THE HANDOVER STAGE: THE EMERGENCE OF THE AFRICAN BISHOP 1960-1978***



*Plate # 7: Marshall Poe, William Silungwe (First African Bishop), Frank Kipe (Last Missionary Bishop), and Jonah Munsanje*

#### **6.1. Introduction**

The previous chapter outlined of the place impact of Bible training and the emergence of senior Church position of Overseer, which was the second highest Church office. The chapter narrates the progression towards final handover of leadership to an African Bishop. The first Zambian Bishop was ushered into leadership in 1978. This chapter traces the process of the emergence of the indigenous Bishop. In a period of political nationalism, the mission was forced to re-think its strategy for leadership training and transition. Three Bishop's elections conducted in Zambia are explored and evaluated in light of the goal of nationalisation of Church leadership.

## 6.2. Contextual Factors and the Handover Process

The period under discussion in this chapter which stretches from 1960 to 1978 was the last phase of the leadership handover in the Brethren in Christ Church (BICC) in Africa. The early 1960s can be described as the end of the colonial period and the rise of nationalism. This period saw the demise of foreign domination, the last phase of which was the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. According to Wills:

The Federation was in fact doomed before the members of the Review Commission ever set foot on African soil. The final watershed had been crossed between 1956 and 1958. No such association can survive without the support of the mass of the people. The Africans in the north not only denied their support, but also were at this time pathologically opposed to the whole system.<sup>1</sup>

The Federation, a regime initiated by the minority foreign political leaders with the sole intention of controlling the socio-political activities of the three territories, was officially founded in 1953. The regime was championed by Roy Welensky who organised a conference with selected names of some political leaders from the various territories which met at the Victoria Falls in February 1949; without any colonial office officials or Africans being present.<sup>2</sup>

Britain had also conceded the rights of African participation in the legislature under pressure from Federal Prime Minister Roy Welensky in favour of the European. This resulted in UNIP staging a campaign of civil disobedience throughout the Northern and Eastern parts of the country. The campaign involved a good measure of violence directed at government property rather than Europeans, despite Kaunda's personal belief in non-violence. This lack of participation in negotiations and the lack of any concession to the rights of African leaders as bargaining agents for their people assured the federation proposals of the implacable African hostility.<sup>3</sup>

As a result of the lack of participation, by 1962, there was widespread African opposition to the white-led Federation. This coincided with Kaunda's passive resistance campaign in Northern Rhodesia.<sup>4</sup> The words of one of the early African politicians Harry Nkumbula then President of African National Congress (ANC) captured the general sentiments of the Africans in that period.

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<sup>1</sup> A. J. Wills, *An Introduction to the History of Central Africa*, Oxford University Press, 1985: 346

<sup>2</sup> T. M. Frank, *Race and Nationalism*, Fordham University Press, London 1960: 37, 39.

<sup>3</sup> T. M. Frank, *Race and Nationalism*, Fordham University Press, London 1960: 42.

<sup>4</sup> A. Roberts, *A History of Zambia*, Heinemann, London, 1976: 220.

We must tell the white settlers in our protectorate and the British that we cannot trust them anymore ... We have suffered from the hands of our supposed partners. Perhaps this has been a blessing in disguise. There is now a rising tide of nationalism among our people. Our national spirit, now ripe, is an upthrust from our long suffering. There is no going back. We are a nation and like any other on earth we love to rule ourselves.<sup>5</sup>

During the period of colonial rule and rising nationalism, the missionary was often regarded as part of white 'superior society'. According to Fuller, the missionary found himself in a respected status by virtue of being a westerner. Nevertheless, few missionaries revelled in their elevated status, most shunned the aura of superiority and sought to be humble servants of Christ.<sup>6</sup>

A consequence of the rise of nationalism was that the Foreign Mission Board of the Brethren in Christ began to foster national ownership of the church. Significant changes in mission leadership indicated the dawn of a new era in Brethren in Christ Mission and Church Development. This chapter will also explore the link between political nationalism and the development of indigenous Church leadership.

This period can be rightly called the era of leadership turnover from western missionaries to indigenous Christians. The momentum of church development and autonomy was at its peak at the beginning of the 1960s. This phenomenon was also known as the period of Zambianisation. It was a period of mission detachment and formation of national churches.<sup>7</sup>

By 1960, it was evident that the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland could not last. The African citizens of the three countries had been expressing dissatisfaction of Federation rule. The 1960s also became the years of the 'wind of change'. Several African countries began seeking political independence. At this point Ghana had already acquired its independence in 1958. This period was an era of the rise of black African nationalism and freedom from western political domination.

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<sup>5</sup> Quoted in D.C. Mulford, *Zambia: The Politics of Independence, 1957-1964*, Oxford University Press, London, 1967: 47.

<sup>6</sup> W. H. Fuller, *Mission-Church Dynamics*, William Carey Library, Pasadena, 1980: 24.

<sup>7</sup> R. Henkel, *Christian Missions in Africa*, Dietrich Reimer Verlag, Berlin, 1989: 137.

### **6.3. Mission Leadership and Indications of Nationalisation**

It was in the context of this political turmoil that the Brethren in Christ Mission existed. The early 1960s also were a time of a paradigm shift for the Brethren in Christ Mission in terms of leadership. Under the leadership of Arthur Climenhaga, who had been General Superintendent since 1950, the Brethren in Christ Mission had seen the emergence of African leaders to senior church positions such as District Superintendents (Overseers). This official church position was second only to the highest office of Bishop.

In 1960, David Climenhaga was appointed General Superintendent taking over from his brother, Arthur Climenhaga who had retired to become the Principal of Messiah College on North America in 1960. Despite their being brothers, David Climenhaga was appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in consultation with the Executive Board in Africa. In an African context where traditional leadership was inherited from family members, it was imperative that mission leadership was not perceived or practised with any semblance of nepotism. It was apparent that David Climenhaga was uneasy about how his appointment could be perceived:

I had succeeded my brother as the General Superintendent. I always felt very sensitive about that. I thought it was a bit like family collusion, though I knew it wasn't. He was appointed by the home board. I was also appointed by the same board, and there were no politics in it at all.<sup>8</sup>

Mission leadership transition was based on a church practice of nomination by the Executive Board and election by the constituent members of the Brethren in Christ Church. According to the Executive Committee Minutes of April 1959, three candidates were presented for the choice of the General Superintendent who was also the Bishop of Africa.

The three names were released in an alphabetical order as sent and approved by the foreign Mission Board: (i) Rev. David Climenhaga, (ii) Rev. J. Earl Musser, (iii) Rev. Dr. Alvan E. Thuma. The choosing was done in a secret ballot and before anything was done in this great matter a prayer was offered by the Rev. S. M. Mudenda who prayed to have the Holy Spirit to anoint the hearts and hands of the committee members that they should be directed by him as they are requested to choose one man among these three great men on

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<sup>8</sup> D. Climenhaga, *Interview*, September, 1999.



the mission field who have done all the work of the church to the best of their abilities.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the fact that the Executive Board of Northern Rhodesia made initial nominations, it was the Foreign Mission Board that gave the final approval of candidates for the position of General Superintendent and Bishop of Africa. Power and authority of choosing leaders on the mission field were reserved to the Foreign Mission Board. The Executive Board made the recommendations and the Foreign Mission Board ratified and confirmed the one leader for the position.

Therefore, David Climenhaga became General Superintendent and Bishop of the African Mission field in 1960. His predecessor, Arthur Climenhaga was appointed to head the denomination's main theological institution, Messiah College in Grantham, Pennsylvania, in the same year. After serving for a term of five years as President of College, Arthur Climenhaga went on to lead the work of the National Association of Evangelicals and was later elected as one of the Bishops in the North American Brethren in Christ Church.<sup>10</sup>

At the time of his departure, Arthur Climenhaga had desired to see the emergence of indigenous led Brethren in Christ Church in Africa. In his last year as General Superintendent, while chairing one of the Africa Executive Board meetings, he announced in a speech to his African colleagues:

It's time for you to look toward the time when there will no longer be a missionary bishop and you will choose one of your own men as a bishop.<sup>11</sup>

Despite the above stated pronouncement, the Foreign Mission Board proceeded to approve the nomination and election of David Climenhaga as the next General Superintendent. Though Arthur Climenhaga had the desire to see the Africanisation of the office of the Bishop, he did not have the power and authority to effect the change of the mission leadership culture of the day.

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<sup>9</sup> The Church Executive Committee, *Minutes*, Northern Rhodesia, 25<sup>th</sup> April, 1959.

<sup>10</sup> Arthur Climenhaga, *Interview*, June 1999.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

### 6.3.1. Impact of Political 'Wind of Change'.

Nonetheless, the 'wind of change' that began with the African political movements began to have a significant impact on the Brethren in Christ Mission's philosophy and practice, despite choosing an American General Superintendent in 1960. A significant step in transforming the Mission's philosophy and policy was the change of the name of the Brethren in Christ Mission Board. At a special session of the Foreign Mission Board meeting held during the General Conference, it was decided to adopt the new title of the Board for World Mission in June 1960.

In light of increasing nationalism on all our fields, it was decided that we recommend to the Church Review and Study Committee the changing of the name of the Brethren in Christ Foreign Mission Board to the Brethren in Christ Board for World Mission.

Whereas, the work of the Brethren in Christ overseas is increasingly affected by the spirit of nationalism wherein any suggestion of the word foreign or foreigner is of ever-increasing cause for ill-will between missionary and national, and a cause of embarrassment to the missionary, therefore the Brethren in Christ Foreign Mission Board would request the Church Review and Study Committee to give consideration to a change of name in our manual of Doctrine and Government and to other official church publications, and thus aid in de-emphasising the word 'foreign' in all our work overseas.

The present Foreign Mission Board would recommend in the place of the current title the name of Board for World Mission.<sup>12</sup>

It is worth noting that the change of name came about as a result of the Brethren in Christ Mission's response and sensitivity to the prevailing political contextual factors. However, the change was influenced by political rather than theological considerations. For a denomination that was explicitly and ardently committed to the Scriptures, there seemed to be an obvious absence of theological reflection and motivation for the changing of the name.

The prevailing nationalist atmosphere in Northern Rhodesia among the Africans was a constant reminder to the Mission that the Africans needed to lead themselves both

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<sup>12</sup> Foreign Mission Board, *Minutes*, (Session at General Conference), Upland College, June 7-13, 1960: 9-10.

in the political and religious spheres. Hostetter underscored this view in his January 1961 field report:

Due to nationalism, the future of missions in Northern and Southern Rhodesia is as uncertain as in many other areas in Africa. We should plan and work in a consciousness that we have before us a great unfinished task and also as though this might be our last year.<sup>13</sup>

There was both urgency and importance attached to the impact of nationalism on the Brethren in Christ Mission strategies in the early 1960s as outlined by Hostetter above. The urgency of the matter was further revealed in Hostetter's interview with Jacob Kulns in February 1961, then Assistant Secretary for the Board for World Mission, regarding the implications of nationalism. Kuln further questioned Hostetter:

Recognizing the restless times in which we are doing mission work, we would like to raise this question: Would the churches survive in India or Africa, if the missionaries had to leave?<sup>14</sup>

Hostetter responded in the affirmative in relation to his field visit to Africa. He stated:

In Africa, we believe the church would survive. God has given us in these more than sixty years of missionary work, some strong national leaders. They sense the problems and responsibilities that go with church leadership.<sup>15</sup>

Despite the confidence expressed in African leadership, the Mission with three Overseers in Southern Rhodesia and two Overseers in Northern Rhodesia had not yet completely turned over leadership to the Africans. Both regions were still under one missionary General Superintendent. There was thus a discrepancy in views between the desires of the Board for World Mission and the reality on the mission field.

When further asked by Kulns as to how the church in Africa and India was being prepared for the possibility that missionaries might be required by the political circumstances to withdraw from the mission field, Hostetter stated that:

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<sup>13</sup> Board for World Mission *Minutes*, Messiah College, January 10-12, 1961, Article 37.

<sup>14</sup> Jacob Kulns, Interview Report, *Evangelical Visitor*, February 20, 1961: 3-6.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

The decision was to recommend to the African Church Executive Committee, and through them to the African Conference, the incorporation of African Church leaders into all church boards, committees, and general mission meetings. This means that today there are African brethren who are meeting with our missionaries in all staff meetings, church boards, committees, and missionary prayer meetings. There are no meetings that are entirely European or African. One of the best ways of preparing these brethren for this eventuality is to have them understand the total workings of the church and mission program.<sup>16</sup>

The inclusion of African church leaders in the various levels and categories of leadership was a positive step to indigenization of church leadership. However, there was an imbalance of power and authority in mission and church leadership. Wilmer Heisey, a former Executive Secretary of the Board for World Mission captured well the dilemma of power and authority in mission and church leadership.

Symptomatic of the stresses experienced by both sides during the years of transition to African administrative leadership was the observation that so long as even one missionary sat on a board or committee that voice would carry disproportionate weight.<sup>17</sup>

In the 1960s, with the colonial era drawing to a close, the American missionaries in Central Africa found themselves in an inherited superior ruling class and in a similar to that of the colonial officials. The Missionaries found themselves steeply locked with the colonial government of the time. It was from the British land commissioners that missionaries had acquired land to build mission stations, though they might not have been the rightful owners of the land. It was also from the same government that the mission had received educational subsidies to propagate western education and, later, the advancement of the new Christian religion. The position of the Mission during this period of transition to indigenous leadership was precarious. On the one hand, the Mission desired to turn over its leadership, whilst on the other hand, they found themselves retaining the more influential roles. There was a tension between remaining in control and delegating leadership with complete authority.

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<sup>16</sup> Jacob Kulns, Interview Report, *Evangelical Visitor*, February 20, 1961: 4.

<sup>17</sup> J. Wilmer Heisey, *Brethren in Christ Missions and the African Church*, 1979: 35.

### 6.3.2. Impact of Board for World Mission's Proposition for Change

However, influenced by the rise in nationalism in the political realm, the Board for World Mission continued with its proposition for leadership turnover and church autonomy. Not only did the Board recommend placing nationals on the newly formulated Executive Board and other committees related to missionary work, but they also encouraged the missionary staff and Executive Board to continue moving in the direction of giving more responsibility to the African Church.<sup>18</sup>

To further enhance the proposition for leadership turnover and church autonomy, the Board for World Mission instructed the field mission leadership to formulate a legal document of constitutional by-laws to govern the process of transition. The following minute was approved by the Board in January, 1961:

That we direct the Executive Secretary to send a covering letter to the field instructing them to appoint a commission composed of national leaders and missionaries to study the organization of the Home church, analyze it in light of field needs, and send to the Board of World Missions a tentative outline of suggestions for the African church constitution patterned as nearly as practical on this constitution of the Home church, and also simplified by-laws in the area of church administration, by General Conference time, June, 1961.<sup>19</sup>

These instructions from the Board for World Mission were a mandate for field mission leadership. The leadership in Africa was given six months in which to respond with clearly delineated expectations. It was not unusual that the Board for World Mission requested a constitution commensurate to the one that was used in North America. They preferred to offer what was familiar in their home country. While the Board attempted to express sensitivity to the practicality and simplicity of the constitution and by-laws, they nonetheless did not offer the field leadership a probability to formulate its own uniquely African constitution and by-laws. At that stage of the development of mission work, the field leaders usually received directives from North America for the operation and administration of both the mission and the church.

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<sup>18</sup> Board for World Missions, *Minutes*, Messiah College, January 10-12, 1961.

<sup>19</sup> Board for World Missions, *Minutes*, Messiah College, January 10-12, 1961, Items 4.

The directives from the Board for World Mission set in motion further development of the church in Africa. The field mission leaders were soon able to follow through with the directives from North America. Some resolutions of the December 1961 General Conference demonstrate the compliance of the field leadership and advancement towards church development in Africa.

The conference which was held at the David Livingstone Memorial School beginning Monday, December 18 and concluding Friday, December 22, was the second of the church and mission representatives in Africa. One of the biggest items before this conference was the presentation of this constitution under the title of Manual of Doctrine and Government for the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa. This title was clearly presented and accepted. Thinking not in terms of an African church so much as a Brethren in Christ Church in Africa in which there would be European as well as African participation.<sup>20</sup>

### **6.3.3. Impact of Change of Name on Nationalisation**

Hostetter suggests that the phrase 'Brethren in Christ Church in Africa', promoted the unity of the church on the mission field in Africa. It also seemingly portrayed one of the core values of the Brethren in Christ Church of brotherhood of all believers, where African and non-African Christians could participate as equals. However, this title presented potential logistical and practical challenges. The obvious misnomer was the clear pronouncement that they were not thinking of an African church. It was evident that the indigenization of the church was not their primary focus. In preferring the title Brethren in Christ Church in Africa, the field leadership had intended to be more inclusive of both missionaries and Africans. While the title aimed at highlighting the oneness of all believers, it seemed to undermine the prominence of African participation and leadership.

The core value of equality between missionaries and African Christians was a challenge to two assumptions implied in the title of the 'Brethren in Christ in Africa'. The first assumption could have been that there would be equal participation by all members. However, as observed earlier with regard to the presence of missionaries on committees, the participation in the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa was not necessarily a partnership of equals, since the American missionaries had the hegemony through their participation in this particular arrangement of church

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<sup>20</sup> Henry N. Hostetter, *Diaries and Memos of Field Trip, Japan, India and Africa*, December 20, 1961, Memo # 6: 13.



government. The missionaries who founded the church also regarded themselves as more knowledgeable than the African Christians in the outworking of the Church.

The second assumption was that both parties would maintain a single loyalty to the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa. However, the missionaries' primary loyalty was, more often than not to their sending churches in North America. According to Climenhaga, missionaries would normally maintain their membership with the sending church.<sup>21</sup> The strong loyalty to the sending church was partly because the financial support came from the North American Church. Moreover, the Brethren in Christ Church did not require the American missionaries to cut links with the sending church before they could accept membership of the African Church.

Through their status as Americans, identified with the founders of the church, missionaries had hegemony of power and influence. By virtue of their membership of the Church in Africa, missionaries were eligible for leadership selection. The unequal participation between American missionaries and African Christians and the divided loyalty of the American missionaries were two obvious elements that effectually gave rise to unbalanced authority, and power, of those who would later become leaders of the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa. When it came to the selection of leaders, the American missionaries still had far greater influence than African Christians.

#### **6.4. Regionalisation and Appointment of First Bishop for Northern Rhodesia**

A second significant resolution relevant to the development of the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa, from the conference held at the David Livingstone Memorial School of was the need for a second Bishop in Africa.<sup>22</sup> From its inception, a General Superintendent, who also served as Bishop for Africa, headed the field mission leadership in Africa. His office was located in Bulawayo, in the then Southern Rhodesia. This arrangement had posed a logistical problem for the development of the church in Northern Rhodesia. The Christians in the north did not have the same ease of access to their Bishop in Bulawayo. Thus, the Bishop for Africa could not serve them as adequately as he did their counterparts in Southern Rhodesia.

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<sup>21</sup> Arthur Climenhaga, *Interview*, June 1999.

<sup>22</sup> Henry N. Hostetter, *Diaries and Memos, Africa Visit Report 1955*: 13.

#### 6.4.1. Proposition for Regional Leaders

The proposition of a second Bishop had important implications for the establishment of another region of church administration. In the same memo of December 20, 1961 Hostetter stated:

It became very apparent to some of us, the first being sparked by one of the African brethren, that it would be possible to set up a regional conference in Southern Rhodesia and a regional conference in Northern Rhodesia on the same basis that we have regional conferences in America and then come together in a General Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa in the conference such as held at Livingstone and looked upon as the continuing General Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa.<sup>23</sup>

The regionalization of conferences enhanced the development of leadership on the mission field. The regions created more potential leadership roles for both missionaries and Africans. It is significant to note that the suggestion for the creation of regions was initiated by an unnamed African. Though the name is not mentioned, it still was a significant contribution worth noting. This resonates with Sampson Mudenda's key question in the previous chapter posed to Arthur Climenhaga in 1951, 'when are we going to be ready?'<sup>24</sup>

The regionalization process adopted for Northern and Southern Rhodesia was based on the organisation structure of the North American Brethren in Christ Church. Following the American model was a convenient method for the mission field leadership to organise the church in Africa, and provided a frame of reference to compare with the two churches. The decision to regionalise was nevertheless based more on traditional precedence rather than suitability to the new context in Africa.

The proposals for regionalization were formulated and implemented during David Climenhaga's term of office as General Superintendent and Bishop. His five year tenure was, however, was cut short by the inauguration of the position of a second Bishop.

The Board for World Mission was responsible for the selection of the new Bishop of Northern Rhodesia. The selection procedure adopted conformed to the pattern of the

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> A. Climenhaga, *Interview*, June 1999.

Home Church's Manual of Doctrine and Government.<sup>25</sup> Following a secret ballot, the Board nominated Earl Musser was chosen to be presented to the Africa Field Mission Leadership. He was later duly elected during the same year and consequently, was consecrated as Bishop of the Brethren in Christ Church in Northern Rhodesia, on 30<sup>th</sup> December 1962.<sup>26</sup> The organisational and operational aspects of the work of Brethren in Christ in Africa were modified to fit into the new pattern of two Bishops. In the short term, Bishop David Climenhaga continued to lead the Africa field leadership as chairman of the General Conference. The newly appointed Bishop Musser assumed the role of Secretary of the General Conference of the Brethren in Christ in Africa. Both Bishops, by virtue of their office, were members of the General Executive Board, which exercised final authority in regard to the placement of all missionaries in the field and the formation of policies for the ongoing work in Africa.<sup>27</sup>

Musser recalled being groomed into mission leadership by Arthur Climenhaga, "He was my guide and mentor. He told me how you do things in Africa."<sup>28</sup> Later, Musser took over from Climenhaga as Superintendent of Matopo Mission and was at Matopo Mission for two years. While at Matopo Mission he worked closely with Philemon Kumalo who was his interpreter. Kumalo later became the first African Bishop of Southern Rhodesia. The close working relationship with prominent African church leaders such as Kumalo gave Musser the opportunity of contributing to some degree to their leadership development.

Subsequently, Musser was transferred to head Wanezi Mission. His farming background became useful because Wanezi Mission had about 5,000 acres with 150 cattle on the farm. While at Wanezi Mission, Musser served closely with Mapandla Moyo, who later became a teacher at Mtshebezi Bible School, formerly known as Wanezi Bible School which had been founded in 1948 by Arthur Climenhaga and Sister Engle. Musser's ability to work closely with African church leaders continued when he was assigned to become Superintendent at Macha Mission in Northern

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<sup>25</sup> Brethren in Christ Church, *Manual of Doctrine and Government*, Article 51: 117.

<sup>26</sup> Board for World Missions *Minutes*, March 19, 1962: 8.

<sup>27</sup> Henry N. Hostetter, Tentative Division of Oversight of Responsibilities on African Field, *Evangelical Visitor*, January 21, 1963.

<sup>28</sup> Earl Musser, *Interview*, June 1999.

Rhodesia where he served alongside Sampson Mudenda who by then was the Overseer of Macha District. Such was the leadership progression of Bishop Musser.

#### **6.4.2. Proposition for Greater African Role of Leadership**

During this period of mission leadership transition of the early 1960s, African church leaders were being groomed for a greater role of leadership in the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa. The Board for World Mission encouraged the missionary staff and the Africa Executive Board to continue moving in the direction of giving more responsibility to the African church. Consequently, the Board for World Mission approved the ordination of three key African leaders, namely, Philemon Kumalo, Jonathan Muleya, and Davidson Mushala.<sup>29</sup>

Another effort to encourage the grooming of African Christians for greater roles of leadership was sending them to North America for familiarisation and educational tours. During the same period, Sampson Mudenda, who had been serving as Overseer and Regional Superintendent, was sent by the Board for World Mission to North America. The Board also confirmed his acceptance to attend Messiah College.

The Board approved the bringing of Sampson Mudenda to America in the year of 1962-63. Decided that for the present we go on record as limiting this program to men.<sup>30</sup>

The gesture of inviting African leaders to North America was commendable. However, the limiting of the experience to male leaders contributed to the ongoing exclusion of women from existing and future leadership.

The exposure programme of African church leaders to the North American Church involved both public speaking and attending selected courses in the theological department at Messiah College. Therefore those Africans selected for the American exposure, were men capable to preach, teach and able to cope with the academic rigour of a North American institution.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Board for World Missions, *Minutes*, Upland College, June 7-13, 1960: 12. The significant outcome of the ordination was that Kumalo later became the first African to be appointed Bishop. Mushala became the successor to Peter Munsaka as the first Deacon and Overseer in Northern Rhodesia. Mushala later represented the second generation of African leaders.

<sup>30</sup> Board for World Mission, *Minutes*, Messiah College, January 8-10, 1962: 7.

<sup>31</sup> Both Davidson Mushala and William Silungwe (the first Bishop for Zambia) followed in being sent to North America.

Hostetter indicates that Sampson Mudenda excelled in his public speaking responsibilities. In a letter from Hostetter to Arthur Climenhaga, he recommended that Mudenda make a tour of three states in the North America, namely, Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee during his time at Messiah College.<sup>32</sup> After Mudenda had completed a number of speaking engagements, Hostetter sent a letter of commendation to Climenhaga, regarding Mudenda's service, which read in part:

Enclosed is an honorarium given specifically for the services of Sampson Mudenda in Southern Ohio. Will you please convey to Sampson, on behalf of the Board for World Mission, our deep appreciation for the services, which he rendered to the mission's program during the days of the conferences.<sup>33</sup>

The exposure of senior African church leaders to the American church was also a means of educating them and preparing them for leadership on their return to Africa. The mission leaders believed that it would enable senior African church leaders to relate competently with the North American Church. Musser underscores this aspect of the Messiah College exposure:

And so we sent all the younger senior church leaders, except the very oldest ones. They didn't have enough of schooling to be able to come here and pitch right into English -taught subjects at collegiate level. It wasn't that they were staying long enough to get a particular certificate, but it was broadening their education and letting them see what the church in America was like. So that what we were teaching there might make more sense to them.<sup>34</sup>

The acculturation of African church leaders to the American church tradition was part of an ongoing transition process in mission and church leadership. The newly elected Bishop Musser perceived his role as that of paving way for nationalization of Brethren in Christ Church leadership. He summed up his task as follows:

I thought my primary task was to help overseers, Umfundisi Sampson Mudenda, and Davidson Mushala. My task was to train them so that the church could choose between them who the bishop was going to be after I left.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> H. N. Hostetter, Executive Secretary, *Letter* to Dr. A. Climenhaga, President, Messiah College, December 12, 1962.

<sup>33</sup> Henry N. Hostetter *letter* to Arthur Climenhaga, February 14, 1963.

<sup>34</sup> Earl Musser, Interview, June 1999.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

Bishop Musser was to be the last leader to be appointed by the Board for World Mission from North America, rather than the church in Northern Rhodesia. Therefore, it was Musser's task to set up the local methods of operation and organisation of the region and its future leadership. The new set up included the establishment of a General Conference, which represented the highest level of decision-making in the Northern Rhodesian Church, including the responsibility of electing the regional Bishop.<sup>36</sup>

Musser was an advocate for African church leadership. His ministry strategy of identifying and developing African leaders was driven by the philosophy outlined in an interview.

Being there as a missionary, I knew that this was not always to be, that soon it would need to be that there would be African leadership for the church. I was there to teach pastors to preach the gospel, and anything that I could help people do to see the Christian faith as being important to everybody's life. And then to help develop a leadership to lead the church because they can do it so much better. They have no language impediment. They also understand the customs, and therefore should be the leaders.<sup>37</sup>

The challenge for him was that it was a personal rather than an institutional strategy. His philosophy was not clearly mirrored in the Brethren in Christ Mission strategy. Musser adhered to his philosophy and demonstrated it in his involvement with national leaders. He not only promoted pastoral leadership, but also encouraged teachers to develop in various spheres of Christian service. Speaking at a Writer's Course for Africans in 1963, sponsored by the Evangelical Literature Overseas held at Choma Secondary School, Musser remarked:

We need Africans who can write effective tracts, inspiring articles, Christian news reports, hymns, and gospel songs.<sup>38</sup>

The Africans who were targeted as candidates were teachers who demonstrated literary abilities. The inclusion of laity in the development of the church's work could only serve to develop the overall Africa leadership. However, at this stage of mission

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> E. Musser, 'From Bishop's Office in Northern Rhodesia', *Evangelical Visitor*. April 29, 1963: 10.



work in Northern Rhodesia, Musser's rationale for mission work was not reflected in the official policy of the mission field leadership.

#### **6.4.3. Missionary Identification with African Church Leaders**

Musser continued with the identification processes with his African co-workers. Another significant step taken by Musser was a proposition through the Executive Committee of Northern Rhodesia of establishing residential and office accommodation for Overseers:

The Committee looked into the present need of the offices for Overseers where they can discuss church matters and be easily found by the people who need them for their attention to some problem matters. This was carried, the offices are to be built at the mission, and that Macha and Sikalongo Mission each are to be given \$150 to take this action.<sup>39</sup>

The inclusion of African Overseers in the missionary compound was a significant development. Prior to this arrangement, African church leaders lived and worked outside the mission station. Musser demonstrated his strategy of truly working alongside Africans. The archival evidence does not indicate if this proposal gained authorisation from the North American Board for World Mission. The initiative was a change from the traditional practice of separate missionary and African accommodation.

The first transition of leadership among senior African leaders occurred under Musser's leadership. The Africa Executive Board approved the name of Davidson Mushala to replace Peter Munsaka in the Sikalongo District. Munsaka received the following note of thanks:

Whereas Reverend Peter Munsaka has been serving as Overseer of Sikalongo District, and whereas he has reached the age of retirement, Executive Board wishes to express its sincere appreciation to Reverend Munsaka for the many years of faithful service given to the church. In spite of increasing years, he has given himself untiringly to the work of the Lord. He has set a splendid example of dedication and loyal service, and we trust that his years of retirement will be fruitful in the upholding of the church in Africa.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Northern Rhodesia Executive Committee, *Minutes*, 11 March, 1963.

<sup>40</sup> Africa Executive Board, *Minutes*, April 20-22, 1964, Item XI.

The change of leadership in the Sikalongo district was the beginning of a new generation of African leadership. The process represented further progress of the development of African church leadership.

Davidson Mushala was inducted as the new District Superintendent of the Sikalongo District on 5 July 1964, at a special consecration service held at the Sikalongo Mission Station. During the service, the ministerial charge was given to Mushala in a message delivered by Sampson Mudenda. After solemnly taking the vows of his office, Mushala was installed as District Superintendent or Overseer as they had been commonly called. At the end of the consecration, Peter Munsaka offered a prayer of dedication to God and the task of an Overseer.<sup>41</sup>

The active participation of the Senior Overseers in the consecration services demonstrated the competence of African church leadership. Each consecration service was presided by the first District Superintendent, and it was highly probable to assume that Bishop Musser must have delegated the responsibilities to the Senior Overseers.<sup>42</sup> It was Musser's practice not only to move Overseers' office into the Mission compound, but also to closely interact with Mushala and Mudenda.

They were both very good friends of mine and I thought they were learning real well in terms of coming to my study, into the Bishop's office regularly. We would talk about the churches and the needs that they might have. They would come to me with any questions or problems related tot heir work. We would also devote time to plan for special services and General Conference.<sup>43</sup>

The ongoing efforts by Musser of developing African church leaders was thus primarily through informal meetings. As demonstrated by Musser, it was possible for African leaders to work alongside missionaries as interpreters or assistants, or as in the case of the two Overseers learn through apprenticeship. According to Climenhaga, a similar trend existed in North America.

Now on this matter of training for leadership, there were no regular courses. It was the practice of life and the decision made in the process of working.

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<sup>41</sup> Earl Musser, New District Superintendent for Sikalongo District, *Evangelical Visitor*, September 14, 1964.

<sup>42</sup> Archival evidence does not clarify this point. However, it seems more consistent with Musser's philosophy of leadership.

<sup>43</sup> Earl Musser, *Interview*, June 1999.

Training in those days was somewhat experience. There was no official course for leadership training. It was training by experience. We spotted out people with talent and put them to work. Even in our church in North America, it was a lot like that. As I pointed out earlier, I was not trained to be the President of a college. I learned the role while doing the job. H. A. Brubaker, who was president at the time saw talent in me.<sup>44</sup>

The trend of informal training was not only commonly practised in North America but also resonated with traditional forms of leadership training in traditional Tonga life. A Tonga headman or chief learned his skills as an apprentice to older and experienced elders of the village. However, there is no denying that in the case of African church leadership, missionaries equally required basic or substantial educational qualifications. Missionaries usually targeted schoolteachers for pastoral or evangelistic roles of leadership, as demonstrated in the establishment of Teacher-Pastor positions in local churches. There was more emphasis on formal educational qualifications than the informal training, although the informal was also given its place.

Musser's time of service as Bishop of the Brethren in Christ Church in Northern Rhodesia and his method of training leaders by apprenticeship coincided with political transition towards independence of Northern Rhodesia. About the same time, the Board for World Mission begun to consider handing over the administrative responsibilities to the church in Africa.

The regionalization of church leadership and organisation were further impacted by the new political developments in Southern Rhodesia. As mentioned earlier, the end of the Federation created potential for the three countries to pursue their national independence. Malawi, which was previously known as Nyasaland, became the first independent nation among the former members of the Federation. The final stages of the independence process for Malawi included the acquisition of the final draft of its constitution in May 1963. This was followed by a successful victory for the ruling party, Malawi Congress Party for the new Legislative Assembly in May 1964. On 6<sup>th</sup> July 1964, Malawi became an independent nation within the Commonwealth. Zambia was next in line to obtain political independence. Through the coalition of two major political parties, namely the United National Independence Party and the

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<sup>44</sup> Arthur Climenhaga, Interview, June 1999.

African National Congress at the end of 1962 paved the way for Northern Rhodesia's advance to independence. Thus, on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1964, Zambia became an independent republic within the Commonwealth.<sup>45</sup>

The end of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland had paved the way for the pursuit of political independence in Northern Rhodesia. With the imminence of national independence, the Board for World Mission was prompted to rethink its leadership role in the administration of the work in Africa.

The decision to confer autonomy to the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa was resolved in January 1964 by the Board for World Mission. At that stage, a memorandum to guide the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa in the transition between its administration under the mission and its full incorporation was prepared for presentation and action by the North American Church's Board for Administration. The memorandum was then sent to the field leadership in Africa. The African field leadership, through the regional bishops, was responsible for implementing the resolutions of the memorandum.<sup>46</sup>

With the memorandum received and endorsed by the North American church, Samuel Wolgemuth, chairman of the Board for World Mission, carried the milestone document to Africa for presentation for both regional conferences of Northern and Southern Rhodesia. The memorandum presented read in part:

The Brethren in Christ Church in America and the Board for World Mission join in thanksgiving to God for the growth of the witness to Christ in Africa during the last sixty-six years.

We believe the day has arrived when the work of the Kingdom of Christ in Africa can be best served by the organizing of a Brethren in Christ Church in Africa. Therefore, the Brethren in Christ Church in America, through the Board for World Mission, presents to the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa through the Northern Rhodesia Regional Conference and Southern Rhodesia Regional Conference the following:

Whereas we believe it would be to the best interests of all concerned that the Brethren in Africa should function as the Brethren in Christ. Therefore the

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<sup>45</sup> A. J. Wills, *History of Central Africa*, Oxford University Press, London, 1964: 38.

<sup>46</sup> Board for World Mission, *Minutes*, Messiah College, January 2-4, 1964.

church in America recommends that the church in Africa officially adopt the name "Brethren in Christ in Africa" and grants into the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa the responsibilities embodied in the Manual of Doctrine and Government.<sup>47</sup>

The memorandum's declaration of autonomy to the church in Africa entailed the transfer of authority and power to local leadership. Regional bishops, Musser and Climenhaga, who were missionaries, headed the field mission leadership at that particular time.

The Brethren in Christ Church in Africa comprised missionaries and national Christians. The leadership was composed of ordained ministers locally referred to as *Umufundisi*. These leaders were normally male pastors.

It is worth noting that the handing over of authority and power to the Brethren in Christ church in Africa did not mention the indigenous national leadership. By following the implied identity of being inclusive and not exclusively African, they were unwittingly marginalizing the already marginalized African church leaders. The Africans at the time did not have the same perceived educational and ecclesiastical qualifications. The missionaries still had hegemony on power and influence, as they were perceived as better than the Africans and more fit to lead.

The name, 'Brethren in Christ Church in Africa', was more of a description of the geographical location, than a title of identity for the church. It was the Brethren in Christ Church located in Africa without the description of the nature of the church. Had there been a deliberate effort of distinguishing the church in Africa from that of America, the name could have read, African Brethren in Christ Church. This would not have been a new phenomenon in Africa. This could have followed the pattern set by the African Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>48</sup>

The shift of power and authority from the American church to the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa had several implications, especially in relation to the selection of church leaders. According to the memorandum regarding African Church transition, some prerogatives were advanced to the church in Africa.

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<sup>47</sup> Board for World Mission, *Minutes*, Messiah College, January 2-4, 1964.

<sup>48</sup> R. Henkel, *Christian Missions in Africa*, Dietrich Reimer Verlag, Berlin, 1989: 62.

Whereas we believe it would be to the best interests of all concerned if the Brethren in Africa would now begin to function as a Brethren in Christ Church in Africa.

Therefore we in America recommend the church in Africa officially adopt the name Brethren in Christ in Africa and assume responsibility for selecting of church officials as vacancies occur as per the Manual of Church Government now in preparation.<sup>49</sup>

The term 'church officials' included the leadership positions of District Superintendent and Bishop. Both missionary and national church members were eligible for all the church offices including District Superintendent and Bishop.<sup>50</sup> Specifically, however, only ordained ministers, both missionary and national Christians, were eligible for election to the positions of District Superintendent and Bishop. Church membership in the church in Africa was open to western missionaries too. This would later have implications for the nationalisation of church leadership in Zambia.

The church in Africa would now be responsible for appointing and placing pastors in all places of worship.

Whereas the appointing of pastors and lay leaders for all worship centers except the mission stations churches cared for by a committee from the church in Africa and whereas we believe the church in Africa should also assume pastoral responsibilities for these churches. Therefore, we recommend that the assigning of pastors at mission stations become the responsibility of the said committee.<sup>51</sup>

Up to this point in time, the mission station had been the missionary's exclusive domain, in which American missionaries were in control. The new expectations created by the transfer of power meant that eligible Tonga pastors were now able to assume leadership positions in territory that had been exclusively American. Pastoral responsibility in a mission station church included spiritual leadership over missionaries and their family. This created the possibility that African Christian

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<sup>49</sup> Board for World Missions, *Minutes*, January 2-4, 1964: 12.

<sup>50</sup> Incidentally, the missionaries only made themselves available for the position of Bishop. Later Musser would be succeeded by a fellow missionary as Bishop. None of the missionaries assumed the role of District Superintendent.

<sup>51</sup> Board for World Missions, *Minutes*, January 2-4, 1964.



leaders could become responsible for the welfare of American missionaries. Furthermore, The Brethren in Christ in Africa were responsible for the recruitment of new missionaries. This placed the African Church in a new relationship with the Brethren in Christ Church in America.

One of the most significant implications of the turnover of control from the Board for World Mission to Brethren in Christ Church in Africa was the place and role of the missionaries. The mission was no longer the legal entity that recruited and placed missionaries in Zambia. That role was transferred to the church in Africa. The authority and power to accept or reject new missionaries were the responsibility of the church.

All missionaries were expected to register as members of the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa. However, American missionaries maintained formal link with their sending church. They were represented on the Executive board by a missionary who reported both to the Foreign Mission Board in North America and to the Bishop in Northern Rhodesia. As bona fide members of the church in Africa, missionaries had the privilege and eligibility of being elected to church offices such as those of the District Superintendent and Bishop. That phenomenon would later pose a challenge to African leadership, particularly in relation to the election of the subsequent Bishops.

## ***6.5. Regionalisation and Operational Changes***

A missionary's membership status in the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa had implications of loyalty and identity. In principle, the missionaries belonged to the national church. However, in practice they were foreigners with an American church connection. Although an attempt was made to identify with the church in Africa, missionary identity was more linked with the sending church in North America than the church in Zambia.

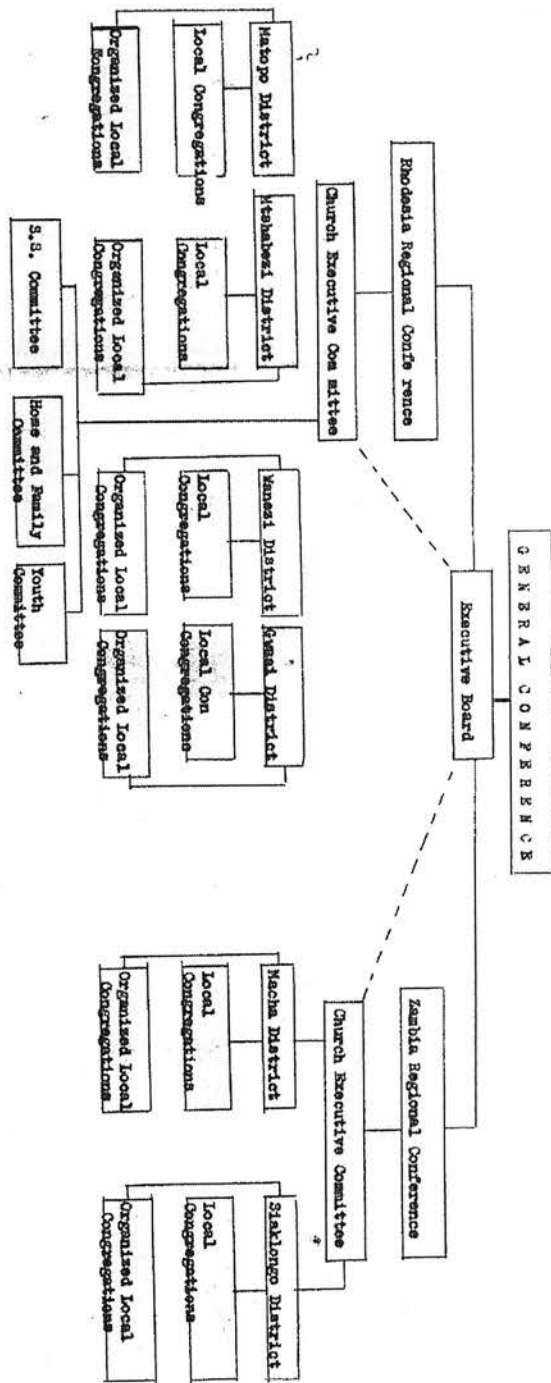
### **6.5.1. Role of Missionary Representation**

With the new structure of the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa, provision was made for a position of Field Chairman, who would serve the personal needs and

interests of the missionaries in the region.<sup>52</sup> It was the field chairman's duty to negotiate with the Board for World Mission on behalf of the church in Zambia on matters of recruitment, travel, tenure and conditions of service with regard to missionary personnel. The Field Chairman's duties also included making recommendations to the Zambia Executive Board regarding missionary assignments. However, the actual placement was the responsibility of the Executive Board. With regard to organisational relationships, the Field Chairman was accountable to the Bishop and the Board for World Mission. The Bishop and Field Chairman worked in consultation with each other.

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<sup>52</sup> Board for World Missions, *Minutes*, Messiah College, Dec. 31, 1964-January 2, 1965, Article 34: 10. This position was later renamed Field Secretary by 1973. The position of field chairman later renamed field secretary.

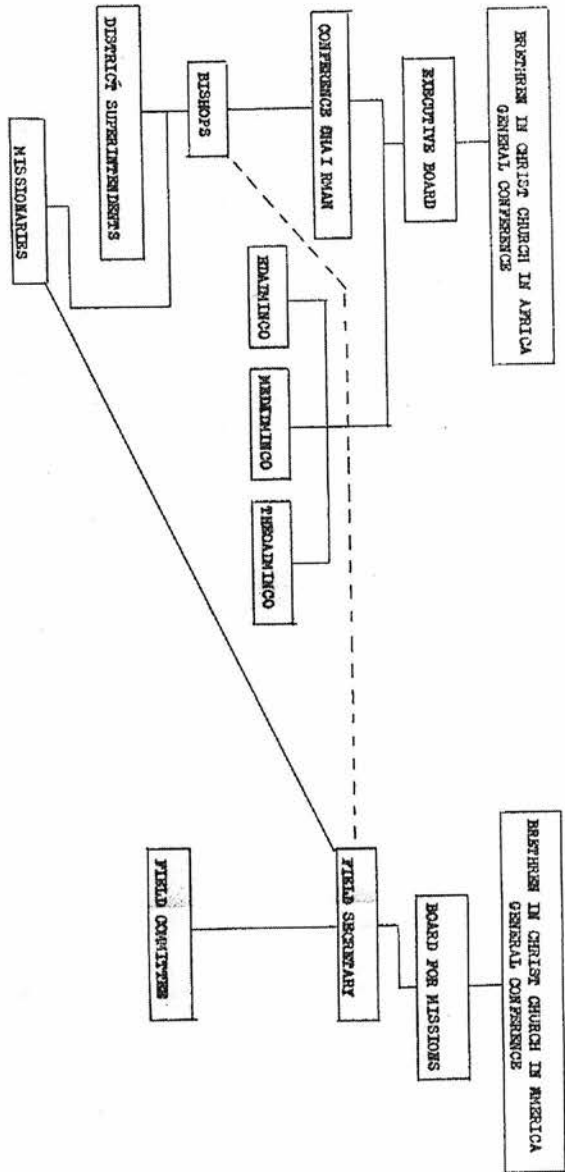


The Executive Board and Church Executive Committees, at present, make recommendations to each other. This has worked well and should continue. Note the broken lines to and from C.E.C. and S.B.

December 31st - January 2, 1965  
Board for World Missions at Grantham, PA.

Fig. #. 2: Organisation Structure Showing the Two Country Regions

December 31st - January 1, 2, 1965  
Board for Missions Meeting at  
Oranienburg, Penna.



1. What is a definition of "to speak in behalf of?"

Fig. # 3: Organisation Structure Showing Role of Field Secretary

Given the above organisational relationships, the missionaries had a dual association to both the receiving or national church in Zambia and the sending church in America. Tension of loyalty was likely to occur, as missionaries were not paid by the Zambian church but the Mission Board.

Despite the apparent dichotomy of membership and loyalty, missionaries went to Zambia under the auspices of the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa rather than the previous arrangement under the Brethren in Christ Board for World Mission. Therefore, in principle, missionaries were bona fide members of the Church in Africa. It was the duty of the Field Chairman and the Regional Bishop to keep open lines of communication for the purpose of unity and mutual understanding in all mission and church matters.<sup>53</sup>

Some of the ongoing concerns of the transfer of control from Board for World Mission to Brethren in Christ Church in Africa included the pace and nature of the turnover process. Hostetter pointed towards a selective turnover process.

It is very clear it will be necessary to try to build a phased program of transition. In Northern Rhodesia the Church Executive committee discussed each of the four steps of progress that are outlined in the memorandum to missionaries as the possible next forward steps. That is,

1. authorize the election of all church officials
2. authorize procedures to organize the church and secure legal recognition and the power to hold property
3. place even the mission station churches under the pastoral care of the outstation churches and
4. continue the study of Mission-Church relationships with the idea of a gradual transition and implementing it as is practical. All four of these were approved in Northern Rhodesia.

The meeting in Northern Rhodesia lasted from early in the morning until 1:00 o'clock. In the afternoon we went to the home of Sampson Mudenda, since he was sick in bed, and discussed with him the discussions as well as the approved times of the morning sessions.<sup>54</sup>

The phased program of transition gave opportunity to the Church in Africa to concentrate on the leadership handover of the church rather than other related ministries of the work of the church. Gradual transition included selective handover

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<sup>53</sup> Board for World Missions, *Minutes*, December 31, 1964-January 2, 1965, Article 34.

<sup>54</sup> Henry N. Hostetter, *Memorandum #2*, 1963: 1.

of leadership. The selection of handing over church administration affirmed the significant role of church leadership.

Regarding the basic question and meaning of turnover, we believe there is much more clarity now than previously. This emphasis included the following ideas, in turnover of the church we are not immediately thinking of educational work, medical work and mission station operations. These will come in due time but require much further study and planning because of the many problems involved. Turnover will commit to the church in Africa the electing of all church officials, the assuming of responsibility for church operations, the assuming of responsibility for greater financial support, and the planning and administering of outreach.<sup>55</sup>

The primary purpose of the coming of American missionaries was to establish the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa. The educational and medical departments were regarded as supplementary avenues of achieving the basic goal of establishing churches in Africa. Although the educational and medical projects were supplementary, they were the most staffed departments in relation to the deployment of missionary staff on the field. Most missionaries went to Africa as professional teachers, nurses, and doctors.

Prior to separating the African church into two regions, namely Northern and Southern Rhodesia Regional Conferences, the General Superintendent was the most senior church leader. He was the link and representative of the Board for World Mission on the mission field and consequently represented both missionaries and indigenous believers. After the introduction of Regional Conferences, the position of General Superintendent was replaced by the position of Field Chairman.

Whereas, the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa has now assumed full organizational responsibility, including the selection of Bishops; and whereas, heretofore the Board – appointed General Superintendent served as Bishop of the Church in Africa, the Board hereby announces the discontinuance of the (title) of General Superintendent, and the representative chosen by the board on behalf of the missionary program in Africa shall be called Field Chairman, thus eliminating the question or confusion concerning his responsibility in the Church in Africa.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Henry N. Hostetter, *Memorandum* #3, November 9, 1963: 1.

<sup>56</sup> Board for World Mission, *Minutes*, Messiah College, June 8-15, 1964: 16,17.



By virtue of his representative role on the mission field, the Field Chairman was an ex-officio on the governing body, the Executive Board. Administratively, the Field Chairman was responsible to the Regional Bishop on the field in Africa. He also was responsible and accountable to the Board for World Mission.

This arrangement provided greater clarity between the different leadership roles in the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa. The modified administrative structure proved more useful later when African church leaders assumed the role of Regional Bishop. The Regional Bishop was the overall leader of the Church. In general, he was more responsible for the affairs of the Church in Africa, while the Field Chairman took care of the needs of the missionaries. For instance the counselling of missionaries was almost exclusively the responsibility of the Field Chairman. He was responsible to the Regional Bishop as and when significant problems arose.<sup>57</sup>

### **6.5.2. Impact of Regional Political Developments on Nationalisation**

After attaining political independence, Zambia became separated from Southern Rhodesia both politically and economically. While political independence was an advantage to the nation, the new political landscape presented fresh challenges for the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa. An immediate problem to overcome was the country's new border regulation between the two nations. This problem was further exacerbated by the emergence of minority white rule in Southern Rhodesia.

Once the fate of the Federation had been sealed, events in Rhodesia began to dominate the stage. There, in marked contrast to the national scene, Field's Rhodesian Front administration, its alert and efficient security services well-supplied with military equipment acted vigorously against the nationalist movement<sup>58</sup>

In addition to travel restrictions on the border between Zambia and Rhodesia, Zambians and their missionary counterparts faced social restrictions when travelling into Rhodesia, as the former Rhodesia was now called. After Zambia gained its political independence, the new government removed race barriers. However, racial discrimination between 'whites' and 'blacks' remained in practice in Rhodesia. African blacks were restricted in their movements and association with the

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<sup>57</sup> See Appendix on *Field Chairman Job Description* for more details.

<sup>58</sup> A. J. Wills, *History of Central Africa*, 1964: 362-3.

Europeans. This 'colour bar' was a source of discomfort for European missionaries. According to Musser, missionaries did not like their fellow believers being treated like second-class citizens in their own countries. Before Zambia's independence, missionaries and African believers could not use the same public facilities such as restaurants.<sup>59</sup>

In contrast with Malawi and Zambia's amicable political relationship with Britain, the Rhodesian government, under Ian Smith, unilaterally and illegally severed its political ties with Britain. Thus, on November 11, 1965, the white nationalists led by Ian Smith declared the infamous Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI). Ian Smith said:

We have struck a blow for the preservation of justice, civilization and Christianity, and in the spirit of this belief we have this day assumed our sovereign independence. God bless you all.<sup>60</sup>

The effect of UDI was not only political and economic, but also had consequences, which rippled throughout society, including the Church. These consequences affected the Brethren in Christ Church and other denominations such as the Catholics, Methodist, and Anglican churches. The declaration of independence forced the Rhodesian Catholic Bishops to cut short their attendance at the Vatican council and return to Zimbabwe. The British Council of Churches, represented by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey, urged Harold Wilson the British Prime Minister, to intervene.

If you and your government should judge it necessary to use force to sustain our country's obligations, then I am sure a great body of opinion would support you.<sup>61</sup>

The Christian Council of Rhodesia with thirteen member denominations was in broad agreement with the British Council. However, the Brethren in Christ, while denouncing the repression and discrimination of the Africans could not overtly

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<sup>59</sup> E. Morris Sider, Ed., *E. Musser, My Story, My Song: Life Stories by Brethren in Christ Missionaries*, Brethren in Christ World Mission, 1989: 407.

<sup>60</sup> J. Linden, *The Catholic and the Struggle for Zimbabwe*, Longman London, 1980: 87, quoted in E. M. Sibanda.

<sup>61</sup> Weller, J. and Linden, J. *Mainstream Christianity to 1980 in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe*, Mambo Press, Gweru, 1984: 211.

subscribe to the use of force. This was due in part to the church's pacific stance. The Brethren in Christ Missionaries sought to keep neutrality of non-involvement in politics, except for a few individual missionaries who urged the Brethren in Christ Church African students to engage in the protest.<sup>62</sup>

According to Sibanda, the BICC in Africa during this period was indifferent to the political oppression suffered by the black people of Rhodesia. The church's perceived position of silence and neutrality was interpreted by some church members who were more politically oriented as tacit support of the status quo. Having said that, it must be pointed out that the church in America had expressed their clear-cut opposition to the Unilateral Declaration of Independence and its consequences upon the church.

The Board of Missions notes that the Rhodesian government has recently adopted measures, which will bring significant changes in the social and economic structures of the country. We believe that some of these changes militate against the scriptural teachings of the equality and dignity of all men.

We, your brethren, in America believe (that) all men are created equal and that God is no respecter of persons. Justice and equality for all and oppression of none are the God-given birthright of all men. Our mandate is clearly expressed in 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself and love one another as I (Jesus) have loved you.' We affirm that non-violence is Christ's standard for all our actions in any crisis.

Throughout the growth and development of the church we confess that our response to these principles and beliefs have not always been clearly defined and adequately demonstrated. We recognize that it is very difficult for you, the Brethren in Christ in Africa, to express to government your concerns and opposition to legislation that violates the Christian principles of freedom and equality for all and at the same time maintain a cordial and working relationship with the government. We assure you of our prayers and moral support as you seek to work for the welfare of all people in your lands.<sup>63</sup>

Despite the clear presentation in the above statement of the church's awareness and concern for the consequences of white minority rule, some politically militant

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<sup>62</sup> E. M. Sibanda, *The Brethren in Christ in Southern Rhodesia, 1898-1980: A Historical Study of its Contributions towards the Promotion of Human Rights*, Dissertation, The University of Denver, Denver Colorado, 1998: 446-472. Missionaries such as Nancy Kreider opted to rally behind her students at the Mtshabezi Mission Teachers Training College in protest against the UDI.

<sup>63</sup> Executive Board, *Minutes*, Statement from Board for World Missions, Item 10, October 1970: 3.

members of the Church in Rhodesia were impatient with the church's leadership. Thus, according to Sibanda, *Ibandla Le Zintandane* was formed. This was an interdenominational organisation of a quasi-religious movement with a very strong political agenda. Some lay leaders of the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa joined the group. The correct rendition of *Ibandula Le Zintandane* was "The Nation of Orphans." The Black Rhodesians felt like orphans because they had been deprived of the right to the land (Fatherland or Motherland). A number of lay leaders of the Brethren in Christ joined this group.<sup>64</sup>

With the escalation of nationalist opposition to UDI, Smith's government began to impose stringent regulations including restrictions on immigration and travel between Zambia and Rhodesia. This move impacted the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa's church leadership programme, as they were unable to continue sending Zambian young people across to Rhodesia for pastoral training. Before the regionalization process, the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa operated as one unit under the Mission Superintendent. All ministerial candidates were enrolled at Wanezi Bible Institute in Southern Rhodesia. This arrangement needed to change after the imposition of the UDI:

Due to political conditions, we were not able for the first time in many years, to send any students to Wanezi Bible Institute this year. This represents to us a serious problem. However, we were able to arrange a two weeks pastor's study course which 20 pastors attended. Likewise, we have received permission to open a single stream Bible School course in 1967 at Sikalongo Mission – truly an answer to prayer for the church here.<sup>65</sup>

In August 1967, the two-week Bible courses were held at the end of August in Choma, Zambia and taught by missionary staff members of the Wanezi Bible Institute. These courses, held outside of the Wanezi Bible Institute campus, gave an opportunity to lay leaders and untrained deacons and evangelists to benefit from theological training offered. Farmers, teachers and homemakers who could not afford to attend a full year's Bible course benefited from such programmes.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> E. M. Sibanda, *Brethren in Christ in Southern Rhodesia, 1898-1980*: 476.

<sup>65</sup> J. E. Musser, *Bishop's Report*, Handbook of Missions, 1967: 26.

<sup>66</sup> J. E. Musser, 'Teaching Them to Observe All Things,' *Evangelical Visitor*, January 16, 1967: 10.

### 6.5.3. Border Restrictions and Implications for Bible Training

The escalating tension in Rhodesia between white minority rule and African nationalist movements resulted in stringent border regulations between Zambia and Rhodesia. Church activities that up to this point had been jointly organised between the two countries faced the challenge of political restrictions. Both regions began to reconsider the operation of certain aspects of church administration, including the training of church leaders at Wanezi, in Rhodesia. Musser's observation captures the desire of the Zambian Region of Brethren in Christ Church in Africa. The option of a Zambian Bible School was the primary objective and aspiration:

Perhaps our greatest need in training is that of a Zambian based Bible School for all potential leaders. In the past, we sent 3 to 5 young men each year to the school at Wanezi. This year due to problems between our countries we were unable to send any. Following discussion of this problem by the Church Executive Committee, the (Committee) presented a strong plea for a school in Zambia, suggesting that Sikalongo Mission, with some unoccupied classrooms and dormitories, might be a suitable place to start.

This has been approved, and we have permission to start when staff becomes available for doing so. Please pray that the Lord will provide this school for 1967. A Bible School in Zambia will be a great event for the church here, and they are eagerly waiting for the opening day. Pray too that the Lord will call those who should enter. Zambia is a land of opportunity in these days.<sup>67</sup>

In the mean time, Zambians faced challenges in securing transport for its students going to Wanezi as well as coping with the two foreign languages, namely Sindebele and English. Some potential Tonga church leaders in Zambia with minimal educational qualifications were hindered from engaging in theological training in Rhodesia. Most places were reserved for students with higher educational qualifications. For this reason, a number of students were interested in entering Bible School when established in Zambia with lower educational entry requirements.<sup>68</sup>

The establishment of a local Bible School in Zambia first appeared on the list of goals and projects review of 1967. According to Musser, the church had made definite progress in achieving this goal. The proposed buildings at Sikalongo Mission were being prepared for opening the Bible School in January 1968.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> J. E. Musser, 'Teaching Them to Observe All Things,' *Evangelical visitor*, January 16, 1967: 10.

<sup>68</sup> Africa Executive Board, *Minutes*, Bible Training in Zambia, June 14-15, 1966, Item XI.

<sup>69</sup> J. E. Musser, The Church Reviews Its Goals, *Evangelical Visitor*. July 3, 1967: 14-15.

During the following year, in his annual report, Bishop Musser reiterated the resolved motion of the Zambian Church leadership regarding the establishment of the Bible School.

The church in Zambia will realize a long-cherished dream when Bible School opens for the first time in January 1968. The training of our national Pastors is a vital necessity. We thank God indeed. It is further planned that when Bible School has been started, a mobile unit will go out into communities to take teaching and training to many who cannot leave their homes to go to the [Bible] School.<sup>70</sup>

Under Musser's leadership, the church was forward looking with regard to regional pastoral training. Not only did they embark on the establishment of a Bible School in Zambia, but they also developed the idea of mobile Bible training units. These would cater for both clergy and lay leadership. In the long-term the strategy of mobile Bible training proved beneficial for the growth of indigenous church leadership in Zambia

During this time of establishing local Bible schools, the church advocated further development of African church leadership by adopting the following resolution:

We encourage the church and missions in Africa to continue giving emphasis to the training and development of national leadership. And we encourage the continuing replacement of missionaries with national leadership wherever possible.<sup>71</sup>

It is worth noting from the above record that the Board for World Mission had combined the need for trained African church leaders with the replacement of missionary personnel by trained African leadership. In contrast, there seemed an obvious absence of this policy of leadership development in the Zambian church's review of its goals and projects. Whether this was a deliberate or unintentional oversight on the part of the Zambian Executive Board is difficult to ascertain. However, it is significant to note that Musser's term of office as Bishop of Zambia was coming to an end at the close of 1967. The election of the next Bishop for Zambia was imminent.

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<sup>70</sup> J. E. Musser, *Bishop's Report*, Handbook of Missions, 1968: 22-23 Note the Handbook of Missions was published a year later, which contained the information for the previous year.

<sup>71</sup> Africa Executive Board, *Minutes*, Item 8, Board for Missions Policy for Africa, September 12, 14, 1967.



## **6.6. Regionalisation and the election of the Second Bishop for Zambia 1968**

At the Zambia Regional Conference of 1968, held at Sikalongo Mission, the election of a new Bishop was to take place. The Executive Board was vested with the responsibility of nominating one candidate who was later presented to the Conference delegates. According to the precedence set in the 1962 Conference elections, the delegates had the responsibility of voting in the affirmative or negative.<sup>72</sup> The ultimate candidate nominated by the Executive Board was an American missionary, Frank Kipe.

In his last report as Bishop of the Zambian Region, Musser stated:

As the five-year term for the Zambian Bishop expired at the end of this year, the church chose Frank Kipe to take up the office. As he, with sister Kipe, takes up these new duties, may we be faithful in our prayers for them and for the church.<sup>73</sup>

Church leaders from both the Zambia and Zimbabwe Conferences positively acknowledged Musser's contribution, now that he was departing from the position of Bishop. Musser had effectively served in both regions and influenced several African church leaders. Kumalo on behalf of the church in Rhodesia said:

Many of us have known you and worked with you in His [God's] service for which we shall ever be grateful for your leadership. Even for good neighbourliness. Many of our people will always remember you as they pass by the Musser Dam and the church building at Wanezi. But best of all we appreciate the spiritual concerns you have always had for all people. You were exemplary in teaching not by word only, but by deed. You left no question in our minds about the role of a servant of Christ. As you were Chairman of the Executive Board, we appreciated your faithful, steady, courageous and confident leadership which pointed us to Christ. We will long remember your generosity, compassion, sympathy, consideration and patience in looking after the flock. We pray that God will continue to help you and your family to shine wherever you go.<sup>74</sup>

The above positive affirmation of leadership was written five years after his last role as Superintendent of Matopo Mission in Rhodesia. However, more immediate was

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<sup>72</sup> David Climenhaga, *Interview*, June 1999.

<sup>73</sup> E. Musser, *Bishop's Report*, Handbook of Missions, 1968: 23.

<sup>74</sup> P.M. Kumalo, An Expression of Appreciation, *Evangelical Visitor*. November 6, 1967.

the impact of Musser's leadership by the Zambian Church. In a joint vote of thanks, the following was said:

We unite in thanksgiving to God for the faithful, spiritual leadership we have enjoyed in the past five years. Those who build for the future will build on good foundations. May God bless Brother and Sister Musser for sacrifice and service for the church, and may God bless their daughters for the sacrifice they have made in the home because so often it was not their own. As you leave us, you will remain in our hearts. The words of the biblical prayer expresses our feelings. 'The Lord watch between us and (you) while we are absent one from the other'. Those you served.<sup>75</sup>

The farewell message from the Zambian church alluded to Musser's desire to build for the future. Musser as we have already seen had desired to prepare Africans for leadership. When asked about his perceived primary role as first Bishop of Zambia, Musser affirmed his commitment to developing nationals for church leadership.<sup>76</sup>

Musser's further reflection on the 1968 transition of leadership revealed his perceived intention of the emergence of an African Bishop in Zambia.

I understood that I was only going to serve for five years. And there is a sense in which I thought an African would be selected when I was finished. Because Mudenda was doing good work and visiting the congregation, preaching and giving leadership in various ways. And Mushala who was a bit older was doing well too. We had sent both men to Messiah College for a period of time to broaden their education and introduce them to the church in America. So my task was to train African leaders. That is what I saw as my task, and I worked very closely with them.<sup>77</sup>

Musser's commitment to developing African church leaders was demonstrated by his involvement in establishing a local Bible School at Sikalongo Mission. However, despite his focus on raising African church leadership, Musser seemed open to the idea of a missionary taking over from him. Therefore, the choice of Frank Kipe as successor though surprising to him, seemed to have been acknowledged as appropriate. This was Musser's reflection on Kipe's appointment as Bishop:

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<sup>75</sup> Anonymous, An Expression of Appreciation, *Evangelical Visitor*. November 6, 1967: 10.

<sup>76</sup> J. E. Musser, Interview, June 1999.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

I thought that Rev. Mudenda was the older man, and was very highly esteemed. But I was wrong as far as the African Church was concerned. When I was finishing my term in 1968, they elected Umfundisi Kipe. And then, they did not only elect him one time, they elected him twice.<sup>78</sup>

Musser was not the only one who had anticipated the election of an African Bishop. There were other missionary leaders such as Graybill Brubaker who also admitted that delegates of the 1967 General Conference expected the same.<sup>79</sup>

According to Musser, the choice of Kipe as second Bishop for Zambia was not entirely inappropriate. Kipe's first 15 years from 1954 when he first arrived in Zambia, were spent on teacher training, management of schools, development of the educational system and working with government to upgrade the quality of education. While serving as Brethren in Christ Educational Secretary, Kipe was asked to serve on the Presidential National Education Advisory Board. This position gave Kipe an opportunity to serve alongside President Kenneth Kaunda. Prior to undertaking the position of Bishop, Kipe served as Principal of David Livingstone Teachers Training College, the responsibility that would have proved useful to ongoing development of African church leaders.<sup>80</sup>

### **6.6.1 Establishing of Sikalongo Bible School**

Upon assuming this office, Kipe embarked on facilitating the ongoing work of establishing the Sikalongo Bible School, a task initially started under Bishop Musser's leadership. Kipe had demonstrated leadership abilities in his earlier role as Superintendent of all outschools. In that role, Kipe monitored the training, recruitment, and supervision of all teachers. He was also responsible for the appointment of Teachers-Pastors. Kipe had served with some of the earliest church leaders including Peter Munsaka and Sampson Mudenda. Musser described Kipe as a brother who was well liked by both Africans and missionaries.

He preached good sermons. He showed leadership. There was no reason why he shouldn't follow me. Except that he wasn't an African and we didn't know when the Africans were going to be ready. But we knew they were ready to

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> G. Brubaker, *Interview*, June 1999. Brubaker later that year (1968), became the first Principal of Sikalongo Bible Institute.

<sup>80</sup> F. Kipe, *Interview*, June 1999.

take over at Lusaka when independence came. And Kaunda proved himself to be a quite well liked person in terms of leadership.<sup>81</sup>

The above reflection reveals in part that the context of political independence was inter-related to the Mission/Church transition of leadership. However, Musser alluded to the fact that Africans might have not been ready. It must be pointed out that the readiness of Africans was not solely dependent on Africans. The church's philosophy and structure dictated who became the Bishop. In the case of the Brethren in Christ Church in Zambia, the Church Executive nominated one name that was later voted for by casting a 'yes' or 'no' vote.

After the Conference election for Bishop, Musser gave his farewell speech, which was followed by Sampson Mudenda's vote of thanks for both outgoing and incoming Bishops. It should be observed that Mudenda had been one of the unsuccessful candidates, yet on behalf of the Church Executive he said:

I wish to say that we have appreciated your leadership. I feel that even if you say you are not coming back, should it happen that through God's plans you are allowed to come (be) rest assured that you are most welcome to us be it day or night.

To you brother Kipe, we would like to say that it is not new for all of us to work with you. We wish you and your wife to know that we shall always do all we can to make your work easy and enjoyable. We believe, too that God will guide and direct you in your work.<sup>82</sup>

The consecration of Frank Kipe as Bishop for Zambia, took place in January 1968.<sup>83</sup> At the beginning of 1968, Bible Schools had become the main avenue for training church leaders. At first, the new Bible School in Zambia was named Choma Bible Institute with the intention of eventually moving it to Choma town. However, the name Sikalongo Bible Institute was adopted when it was decided that they keep the institute at Sikalongo Mission.

The Institute was founded by Fred and Grace Holland, who were both theological educators based at Wanezi Bible Institute in Rhodesia where they had served from

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<sup>81</sup> J. E. Musser, *Interview*, June 1999.

<sup>82</sup> Church Executive Committee, *Minutes*, 6<sup>th</sup> September, 1967.

<sup>83</sup> Editor, 'Consecration of Bishop in Zambia, *Evangelical Visitor*. April 8, 1968: 6.

1964 to 1967. At the end of that term, they were sent to Zambia to open the new Bible Institute. They served at Sikalongo Bible Institute for six months then went on furlough handing over principal role to Graybill Brubaker.

Initially, three students were enrolled at the Institute: Moses Munsaka, William Silungwe and Jonathan Mwaalu. According to Brubaker, Munsaka was a man of limited education, but wise in the knowledge and traditions of the Tonga people.<sup>84</sup> Silungwe was a small man with little experience of Tonga Village life, but with a keen mind and a good command of English. Silungwe was not a fully-fledged Tonga person. His father was from the Mambwe tribe or people group of Northern province and his mother was Tonga from Southern province of Zambia. Mwaalu was the youngest of the first three students. Theological instruction was conducted in both English and Tonga languages. Brubaker would later depend on Silungwe for translation work.

A typical day would find me asking William a question in a simple English sentence, which he would pass on to Moses in an extended *citonga* paragraph. Moses would reply in a florid *citonga* paragraph, which William would then give to me in a simple English sentence.<sup>85</sup>

It was from these first three students at Sikalongo Bible Institute that the first African Bishop would later emerge. The Bible Institute operated on a similar format as Wanezi Bible Institute in Rhodesia. The focus of theological training was pastoral.

### **6.6.2. Introduction of Theological Education by Extension**

After returning from furlough in America, the Hollands returned to Sikalongo to operate the Bible Institute. With increased concern for mature men who were already leaders in the churches, but could not afford to leave their homes and other domestic responsibilities to take residential training, the Hollands adopted the strategy of Theological Education Extension (TEE). It aimed to serve men and women who could not afford to leave their homes. A similar program was being tried in Central America. Surrounded by subsistence farming people and a shortage of qualified students to the Bible Institute, TEE would later become one of the most strategic ways of training lay leaders and clergy for the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa.

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<sup>84</sup> Graybil Brubaker, *Interview*, June 1999.

<sup>85</sup> E. M. Sider, *My Story, My Song*, Brethren in Christ World Missions, 1989: 34-35.

At the beginning of its second year (1969), the Bible Institute still had the three final year students and two new first year students, one of whom left shortly afterwards. At this time, Brubaker carried a heavy assignment as Principal, teacher, and Mission Superintendent. In the summer of the same year, Brubaker was transferred to Macha Mission, leaving Fannie Longenecker to undertake the duties of both Principal and Teacher. She had the privilege of handling the first graduates of the Sikalongo Bible Institute in 1969. However, the low enrolment at the Bible Institute was a significant concern for the church.

The Bible School is short of students. There are only four students. One left the school on his own. Rev. Kibler expressed that the church was failing to do its main duty. She was failing to find people for training as leaders. He pointed out that this might eventually lead to the closure of the Bible School.<sup>86</sup>

Despite the low enrolment, Sikalongo Bible Institute registered its first three graduates. All of them were family men and received assignments in the church. The annual report for 1969 at the point of their graduation, carried the following captions:

William Silungwe, with a three year-old and small twin sons, is a keen student of the Word. He has been assigned pastor of the Choma Brethren in Christ Church in a lovely new church building dedicated in November. He had helped in the beginning of church work in the Choma Townships.

Jonathan Mwaalu, youngest in the class, with a brighter little daughter and a good wife to stand by him, had been assigned assistant pastor of the Livingstone church. For a long time we have prayed for a national pastor there where the attractions of the city life have proved a snare to many.

Moses Munsaka, father of two boys and two girls, is a village pastor. The Muchila Church is in an area where there are many people to be led to the Lord. His wife will assist in rural health clinic there.<sup>87</sup>

The descriptions of the first graduates included their marital status and specific assignments. The descriptions reflected the importance attached to marital status as a significant prerequisite for church leadership. This was also in conformity with African traditional expectations regarding leaders. After graduation, the pastoral

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<sup>86</sup> Church Executive Committee, *Minutes*, February 1969: 1.

<sup>87</sup> Bishop's Report, *Annual Reports*, Brethren in Christ Missions, 1969.



assignments demonstrated the varied gifts and abilities suitable for the station of service. Munsaka was assigned to village pastorate due to his vast knowledge and wisdom in Tonga traditions and culture. Silungwe and Mwaalu became the first African ministers in the urban churches. Both of them were able to serve among the Africans and expatriate populations.

The desire of the Livingstone church organization for a national pastor was given to the committee by the Church Executive Board. Among the qualities to be considered were: he should be a man of maturity with experience in church work; he should have Bible training and able to have a good influence on all classes of people; he should have an active and influential wife.

After considering the above request and the need for pastors at other churches as well, the following assignments were made:

Choma Church: Mr. William Silungwe, full-time Pastor.

Livingstone Church: Mr. Jonathan Mwaalu, Assistant to Pastor G. I. Schwartz.<sup>88</sup>

Qualifications for church assignments prominently included gender and academic qualifications. With regard to gender, it seemed to have been a foregone conclusion that the churches were looking for male pastors. This would later explain in part the absence of female church leaders.

The duties and wages of the church workers were revised with a view of attracting more candidates to pastoral work. The proposed increment was effected from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1970, as follows:

With no Bible Training	From K13.00 to K17.00 per month
With Vernacular Course	From K16.00 to K20.00 per month
With English course	From K20.00 to K24.00 per month

The three graduates from the Bible Institute were allocated the following wages:

Mr. William Silungwe	K24.00 per month
Mr. Jonathan Mwaalu	K24.00 per month
Mr. Moses Munsaka	K20.00 per month <sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Church Executive Committee, *Minutes*, 15<sup>th</sup> November, 1969: 1.

<sup>89</sup> Church Executive Board, *Minutes*, January 31, 1970: 2.

Their wage differences reflected the level of courses attained whilst training at the Bible Institute. Munsaka had limited education, therefore pursued the vernacular course whilst Silungwe and Mwaalu pursued the English programme. However, this system of linking wages to academic qualifications overlooked the influence and impact of the role of particular pastors and revealed in part the bias of a educational emphasis on qualifications for church leadership. This would later have direct impact on the readiness of Africans for senior church leadership positions.

Following the successful completion of training by the first graduates, admission requirements were streamlined according to the church administrative structure. Candidates desiring to attend the Bible Institute had to be approved by the Church and Bible courses were offered in Tonga and English. It was recommended that wives accompany their husbands and courses were specifically designed for women to equip them to serve alongside their husbands in pastoral work. Applicants were required to be interviewed and approved by the District Superintendent who would recommend successful candidates for Bible Institute training to the Bishop, a task that demanded a high level of confidentiality.<sup>90</sup>

An ongoing challenge in the pastoral training programme was the acute shortage of students. Students' enrolment to the Bible Institute rarely exceeded four successful candidates.<sup>91</sup> This meant that there was normally a small number of students in the residential programme. This phenomenon became a major cause for prayer, as Mudenda's annual report of 1970 reflects the state of affairs.

There is an acute problem of shortage of pastors and preachers in our churches, and we request you to pray for this need so that God may have enough labourers in the vineyard. Many young people these days seem to lose interest in serving Christ and some have a tendency of going out to find some more remunerative jobs and the work of God suffers.

The only solution to our church problems of having not enough church workers will be through the ministry of our Bible Institute. The ministry is being expanded by the Bible Extension Centres. It is in each of these areas we shall have dedicated Church leaders.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Church Executive Board, *Minutes*, March 1970: 10.

<sup>91</sup> See Appendix, List of Graduates of Sikalongo Bible Institute.

<sup>92</sup> S. M. Mudenda, *Preachers and Pastors*, Mission Annual Report, 1971: 22.

The precursor to the TEE programme was the mobile Bible School plan operated by Wanezi Bible Institute in Rhodesia.

The new venture in Bible Training for pastors and other interested workers was one of the highlights of Zambia in 1970. The problem of equipping pastors for an effective ministry has long concerned the church in Africa. Bible conferences, correspondence courses, preacher's booklets, sermon outlines, and Bible studies were attempted with varying success.<sup>93</sup>

### 6.6.3. TEE and Church Leadership Training

The TEE programme was initiated as a pilot project by Fred and Grace Holland, as a non-residential training scheme. The Church Executive Board had approved the extension concept. It soon became accepted by the students and became an established educational tool for effective training demonstrated by the chart outlining its input during 1970:

	<b>Singani</b>	<b>Halumba</b>	<b>Mweebo</b>	<b>Choma</b>	<b>Totals</b>
<b>Enrolled</b>	9	29	41	18	97
<b>Attended less than two classes</b>	3	3	8	2	16
<b>Average Attendance</b>	5	18	22	12	57
<b>Attended Over Six Classes</b>	5	21	18	11	55
<b>Pastors</b>	3	5	3	4	15
<b>Teachers</b>	3	5	6	1	15
<b>Men</b>	7	24	27	17	75
<b>Women</b>	2	5	14	1	22
<b>Grade 7 or Above</b>	6	17	14	18	55
<b>Attended Retreat</b>	4	8	21	6	39

*Fig. # 4: TEE ATTENDANCE CHART*

TEE therefore had an impact that went beyond the normal residential programme, particularly through the participation of a significant number of women. Previously, women only attended Bible courses if their husbands attended residential Bible Institutes. It is also worth pointing out the large number of lay people involved in the

<sup>93</sup> Brethren in Christ Missions, *Bible Extension Course*, Year Book, 1971: 31.

TEE scheme. The involvement of lay people resulted in a significant rise in the number of local church leaders. By 1970, it was reported that Sikalongo District had twenty (20) churches, with one (1) full time pastor and nineteen (19) lay pastors (leaders), most of whom must have attended the TEE programme.

The TEE programme therefore provided opportunity and easy access to Bible training for people who could not have ordinarily attended formal theological training. It gave people an opportunity for learning whilst continuing with other professions and responsibilities. Holland alluded to its significance in his annual report of 1970:

The real value of the class sessions was the discussion. I have never seen such deep continued discussion in Bible Class before. The weekly people contacts were a valuable part of the programme.

The extension concept with programmed lessons comes to the church as an effective workers-training tool with many side benefits and few operational problems found in resident situation. From the standpoint of management and fulfilling our church objectives it would appear that better utilization of our personnel, finances, and time would result in an escalation of the extension program.<sup>94</sup>

Despite its effectiveness, the TEE programme posed challenges of long travels for its instructors, who also carried teaching responsibilities at the residential institution. The contact and interaction with students, though profitable during the session, ended with the completion of the TEE course. Moreover, it was difficult for participants to maintain consistent attendance at the various courses offered, due to domestic commitments. While many attended, it must be observed that few could manage a protracted period of attendance.

### ***6.7: Regionalisation and Autonomy of Church Administration***

Political changes in Rhodesia not only resulted in the establishment of a local Bible Institute in Zambia, but also had further organisational and church leadership implications. While the Bible Institute and TEE programme flourished in Zambia, the Rhodesian 'white' government imposed further political and economic

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<sup>94</sup> Fred Holland, Brethren in Christ Missions, Annual Report, 1970: 17-18.

restrictions on travellers from either country. The conference of 1970 was a good illustration of the hardships of travel between the two countries.

Bishop Kumalo and Rev. Stern are co-ordinating travel arrangements for those coming from Rhodesia. We are recommending that members travel by cars as there are no convenient train connections between Rhodesia and Zambia trains. For the sake of economy, all drivers should carry as many members as convenient possible. May I ask each of you to join us in prayer that all visas will be approved and that special permission required for Rhodesian nationals to enter Zambia will be obtained.<sup>95</sup>

With increasing border restrictions between the two countries, the Regional Conference Leadership of the two countries resolved to introduce independent national conferences. This followed the resolution to establish separate churches with the Regional Bishop as the highest Office Bearer.

General Conference of 1972 made far-reaching decision, by a first reading, to alter our Manual of Doctrine and Government to provide for the reorganisation of our churches into separate conferences, one operating in Rhodesia and the other in Zambia.<sup>96</sup>

The completion of anticipated reorganisation of the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa into two separate churches, one functioning in Rhodesia and one in Zambia was not immediate. Initial plans for the change were effected at the Rhodesia's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations Conference at Matopo Mission in August 1973.<sup>97</sup> The imminent changes would later affect the administration of the respective church. While the churches would be administratively independent of each other, they would maintain close fellowship.

#### **6.7.1. Leadership Turnover Among Senior African Church Leaders**

The early 1970s were years of advancement and gradual turnovers of leadership among Senior African church leaders. By 1970, Mudenda was starting his fourth term of office as District Superintendent, a position second only to Bishop.

The term of office of Rev. S. M. Mudenda as District Superintendent expires in 1969. In accordance with the Manual of Doctrine and Government, the

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<sup>95</sup> H. F. Kipe to Conference Chairman, *Letter*, 16<sup>th</sup> November, 1970, Choma.

<sup>96</sup> H.F. Kipe, *Bishop's Report*, Brethren in Christ Missions, Annual Report, 1972: 19.

<sup>97</sup> H.F. Kipe, *Bishop's Report*, Brethren in Christ Missions Annual Report, 1973: 19.

Church Executive Committee is to present a name (or Names) to the Executive Board. If approved, the name (or Names) goes forward to Regional Conference for their consideration and decision.

After very careful and prayerful consideration it was decided to put forward one name, that of Rev. S. M. Mudenda, to Regional Conference through the Executive Board as our nominee for District Superintendent for Macha District for the next five years 1970 to 1974 inclusive.<sup>98</sup>

There was continued confidence expressed in Mudenda's leadership as articulated by the Executive Board. Later in the year, a rededication service was organised for him and his wife.

Rev. and Mrs. S. M. Mudenda were rededicated to carry out the duties of District Superintendent for Macha District. This service was conducted by Bishop A. J. Book. The conference signified her willingness to support the Mudendas by standing, which act was made unanimously.<sup>99</sup>

However, it must be pointed out that while Mudenda continued in his role as District Superintendent, his counterpart in Rhodesia, Philemon Kumalo was elected as the Bishop of the Brethren in Christ Church. Mudenda returned his second-in-command role in Zambia.

During 1970, Mudenda was selected to serve on a special committee for pastoral assignments. The work of the committee involved placing Bible Institute graduates in the various churches in both urban and rural areas, and attending to the ongoing problems of the church's failure to attract people for Bible Training.

As an ongoing effort of turning over leadership and authority to African church leaders, the Board for World Mission resolved in their 1970 board meeting to handover Mission and Church properties to local leadership. Mudenda was elected as one of the first members of the Board of Trustees. The trustees were responsible for the ownership of mission property once administered by missionary staff. At this time, Mudenda was the most senior African member of the Board.<sup>100</sup> At this point African Church leaders had assumed all senior Church position except that of a Bishop. With the anticipated Bishop's election about to be held in 1973, some had

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<sup>98</sup> Church Executive Committee, *Minutes*, February 15, 1969: 2.

<sup>99</sup> Zambia Regional Conference, *Minutes*, April 22-27, 1969.

<sup>100</sup> Board for World Missions, Executive Committee, *Minutes*, April 2, 1970, B702-10: 70.



anticipated that an African would assume the role of Bishop. Mudenda's leadership legacy indicated that he was a likely candidate.

Other senior leadership progressions included Mushala who had succeeded Peter Munsaka as Superintendent for Sikalongo District. Munsaka died in 1971. During the Regional Conference in the same year, William Silungwe was elected as Superintendent. Silungwe had served as pastor for three and half years at the Choma church. The district had twenty churches, with meeting places varying from well-built Choma church to shelter-like structures under trees.<sup>101</sup>

Mudenda, in his role as District Superintendent, also served as the vice-chairman of both the Regional Conference and the Church Executive Board. In essence, Mudenda was the assistant to Bishop Kipe who chaired both committees by virtue of his position..

### **6.8: Regionalisation and the Second Bishop's Election, 1973**

Bishop Kipe's term of office ended in 1973. According to the regulations of the church, elections for the office of the Bishop were scheduled during the Church's General Conference. The electoral procedure remained the same as in the earlier 1968 elections. This included nominations which were submitted to the Church Executive who later presented the preferred name to the conference for the affirmative vote. Voting was done by secret ballot and decided by majority vote. Mudenda's name was nominated to the Executive Board. However, it was Frank Kipe's that was recommended for the affirmative vote to the conference.

Kipe was elected to his second term of office. At this time, some missionaries and African church leaders had anticipated that an African candidate would be voted for the office of Bishop. Reverend Jonathan Mwaalu one of the first graduates of Sikalongo Bible Institute observed:

We were expecting Reverend Mudenda to become the next Bishop. He had worked as District overseer for many years. He was also an educated person. But when the elections were conducted, it was Frank Kipe who was

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<sup>101</sup> Editor, 'William', *Evangelical Visitor*. September 10, 1872: 9.

appointed. We had to accept the result as it was given to us by the executive Board.<sup>102</sup>

Marshall Poe who served as Principal of the Bible Institute commented:

As I recall, Frank Kipe had agreed to serve only one term as Bishop. At the end of his term, Sampson Mudenda's name was given as candidate for Bishop. During the pre-election time, rumours surfaced that he was involved in witchcraft. Due to pressure from some in the Zambian Church, Frank Kipe decided to allow his name to stand for re-election. He easily won, but had what we recall an uneasy second term.<sup>103</sup>

Bishop Kipe acknowledged that the Zambians wanted him to continue as the leader of the church. However, he was quick to point out that there were Africans who were capable of becoming Bishops.

I had worked with Sampson Mudenda for years. They could have chosen him. I think they were looking for somebody who would well represent them. At that point, they were also still depending a lot on financial support from the States. And I think there was a feeling for a long time that even though they could choose their own leadership, financial support would change if they chose Zambian leaders.<sup>104</sup>

The planned efforts of nationalization of church leadership in the Brethren in Christ Church in Zambia had been hampered by the election of Kipe as Bishop for the second time. The church had the challenge of what to do with Sampson Mudenda, the defeated candidate. There was no clear evidence of the alleged rumours of Mudenda's involvement in witchcraft. At this time, Mudenda had served for twenty years as District Superintendent. The allegations without adequate proof seemed to demonstrate a lack of trust among Africans from various Tonga clans. While such an observation is a conjecture, the reality of two major clans represented by Sikalongo and Macha areas could have been a contributing factor. Therefore, the choice of a missionary was a neutral option.

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<sup>102</sup> Rev. Jonathan Mwaalu, *Interview*, July 1999. Rev. Mwaalu later served as the only overseer under Bishop William Silungwe and Shamapani from 1978 to 1993.

<sup>103</sup> Marshal Poe, *Interview*, July 2003.

<sup>104</sup> H. Frank Kipe, *Interview*, June 1999.

### **6.8.1. Attempts of Zambianisation of Position of Bishop**

Despite the failure to assume the office of Bishop, Mudenda continued to serve as Vice-Chairman of both the Church Executive and Zambia General Conference. At the same time, Silungwe was one of the committee members representing Sikalongo District.<sup>105</sup> Mudenda's leadership influence continued to be recognised by the Church, as he served in various capacities including a committee focusing on the Zambianisation of church leadership.

The committee appointed to study the goals of the church as they relate to a diminishing missionary presence met in Livingstone on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 1974. Members of the committee are: Bishop H.F. Kipe, Covener; Rev. S. M. Mudenda, Rev. M. S. Poe, Mr. J. R. Moyo, and Mr. R. M. Sichala.<sup>106</sup>

In the middle of the 1970s, there was increased emphasis for nationalization. The impetus for African leadership was mainly coming from the Board for World Mission. Musser was serving as Director for Missions after retiring from field missionary service and became one of the advocates for nationalization. He was the main link between the Board for World Mission and the field mission leadership led by a western missionary, Bishop Kipe. He made the following observation:

For years, by our prominent role in the church life in these countries, we've taught them to depend upon us for both advice and means to do God's work. How long can this continue at a given place without stifling the initiative of emerging leaders who themselves should be making policy for the church, and learning dependence upon the Holy Spirit for the needs of the church? The answer has been with us for many years. 'They must increase and we must decrease'. What remains is for us to put this more fully into practice.<sup>107</sup>

Musser advocated the transfer of leadership to local church leaders rather than the abandonment of missionary involvement in the mission churches. Further dialogue during the 1974 board meetings was organised between members of the Board for World Mission and the Zambian Executive Board, following which recommendations were made for various administrative committees to carefully project their needs for replacing missionary personnel. Observing the sensitivity of this matter, the Zambian Church Executive Board noted:

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<sup>105</sup> Zambia Executive Board, *Minutes*, December, 1974.

<sup>106</sup> Zambia Executive Board, *Minutes*, September 1974.

<sup>107</sup> J. E. Musser, 'Challenge in Missions, *Evangelical Visitor.*, July 10, 1974: 8.

It is strongly emphasized that the objective of this exercise is not to turn the missionaries away from the work of the church but rather to develop local personnel to the fullest possible extent for service and to work in close co-ordination with all missionary personnel. It is envisaged that missionary and professional personnel would be requested from overseas by the church in Zambia for a long time to come.<sup>108</sup>

The momentum of leadership turnover was not confined only to missionary positions, but involved Zambian senior church leadership positions too. A case in point was the transfer of Mudenda from Macha to Sikalongo District to Sikalongo Bible Institute. This enabled Mudenda to be appointed as the first African Principal of the Bible Institute, after having served for twenty-two years as District Superintendent for Macha at the end of 1974.<sup>109</sup>

Following Mudenda's transfer to the Bible Institute, Jonah Moyo was appointed District Superintendent for Macha. Jonah Moyo was a schoolteacher who later became a pastor. He served as Secretary of the Church Executive Committee and Regional Conference from 1964 to 1974. He was one of the first African instructors and translators of TEE study materials. With the help of Fred and Grace Holland, Moyo co-authored one of the TEE books entitled 'Bringing People to Jesus'. He assumed his duties as District Superintendent for Macha in January 1975.<sup>110</sup>

After six short months, Moyo died on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1975. With his sudden death, the leadership structure was left with only one District Superintendent in Sikalongo. The Church Executive Board decided to reorganise one superintendent.

The ever-increasing load of responsibility is being carried by national church leadership. Maturity and wisdom have characterized discussion and decisions. Mr. Jonah Moyo took office as Macha District Superintendent in January 1975 and was called home to be with the Lord on 19<sup>th</sup> June 1975. Rev. Silungwe was then chosen as Overseer to assist the Bishop in the oversight of all 67 congregations.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Zambia Executive Board, *Minutes*, September, 1974: 12.

<sup>109</sup> H. F. Kipe, *Bishop's Annual Report*, 1974: 19.

<sup>110</sup> V. Brillinger, 'A Prince in the Presence of the King'.

<sup>111</sup> H.F. Kipe, *Bishop's Annual Report*, 1975: 20.

Silungwe's appointment made him the sole assistant to the Bishop, a role that prepared him for future leadership responsibilities. In the same year, Mudenda was awarded a scholarship to study in America.

### **6.9. Regionalisation and the Third Bishop's Election, 1976**

The Church Executive Board resolved to have early elections for the office of Bishop, although Bishop Kipe's term of office was not due to end until 1978. This step was taken to provide for a longer period of leadership handover procedures.<sup>112</sup> At its General Conference of 1976, the Church Executive organised the elections for the Bishop of the Church in Zambia. The candidates for the position of Bishop included Sampson Mudenda and William Silungwe. At this time, Mudenda was serving as Principal of Sikalongo Bible Institute. Silungwe as already noted was the only Overseer assisting Bishop Kipe.

In accordance with the electoral procedures stipulated in the Church's Manual of Doctrine and Government, the Church Executive had the mandate to present a name to the General Conference for final voting. The name of William Silungwe was selected and presented to the conference. The conference voted and affirmed Silungwe as the next Bishop. An article to announce the election of the new Bishop appeared in the church periodical.

Very significant in the life and growth of any mission-planted church is the day when her own members choose from among their own ranks the leader of their church. On Friday August 20, 1976, the Brethren in Christ Church in Zambia assembled in General Conference, chose Reverend William T. Silungwe (aged 46 years) to be their next Bishop. He is to take office in January 1978.

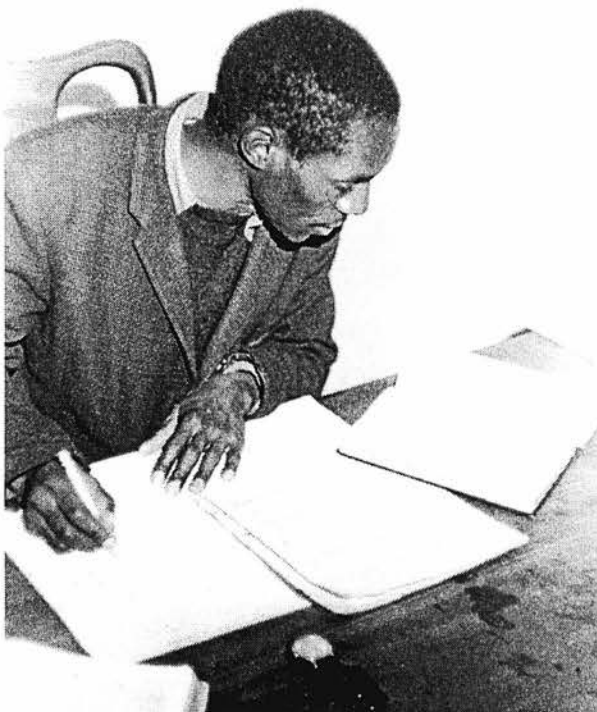
The life, the ministry and the home of Reverend and Mrs. Silungwe so beautifully matched the biblical description of an Overseer in the church as recorded in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

Reverend Silungwe has after three and one half years of pastoral experience, served the church in Zambia as District Superintendent for five years. His warm love and understanding for pastors and their work has endeared him to the shepherds. He inspires confidence and a sense of responsibility among those he serves.

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<sup>112</sup> H. F. Kipe, *Interview*, June 1999.

Pray for Brother Silungwe as he spends a year of study at Messiah College. Pray for Mrs. Silungwe and their five children who will be alone without husband and father. Pray for our church in this transition period. Praise God for His faithfulness and blessing to His people.<sup>113</sup>



*Plate # 8: William Silungwe at Work as Bishop of the Brethren in Christ in Zambia)*

After one year in North America, Silungwe returned to be installed as the first African Bishop in the Brethren in Christ Church in Zambia. The consecration service for Bishop-designate Silungwe was held on 8<sup>th</sup> January 1978, at Macha Mission Church. This was followed by a farewell service for retiring Bishop, Rev. Kipe.

The Executive Board appointed two committees to plan for the two services. The consecration programme committee consisted of Bishop Kipe as convenor, Rev. Mudenda, Rev. Mwaalu, Rev. Poe and Deacon Munsanje. The farewell committee

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<sup>113</sup> H. F. Kipe, 'Church in Zambia Elects Bishop Designate,' *Evangelical Visitor*, November 10, 1976: 8.



comprised Mr. J. S. Muleya as conveyor, Rev. Stern, Rev. Mudenda, Dr. Spurrier and Mr. S. P. Muleya.

Mudenda remained a prominent figure in the organising committees of the church despite not having being chosen as Bishop. In the same conference Rev. Jonathan Mwaalu who had served for six years as pastor of the Livingstone Congregation, was chosen as the new Overseer for the church. He took office earlier than the Bishop-designate. Kipe described Mwaalu's work as follows:

His first year of service as Overseer could be summarized by saying that he was constantly about his work, counseling, visiting, encouraging, and directing the pastors of the local congregations. He has visited almost all local churches during the year. His ministry has been fruitful.<sup>114</sup>

Despite the positive reports from Bishop Kipe, the reaction to Silungwe's appointment were varied. While acknowledging the results of the election, Kibler observed that:

There was another potential candidate that most people thought would become the Bishop. But the Zambians did not approve, and they elected almost, as it were, a dark horse candidate. And everyone was surprised, including Bishop Silungwe that he was chosen because he was one who had not had a lot of formal training or highly visible in the church.<sup>115</sup>

Silungwe, who had also expected the other candidate to be selected, confirmed his surprise at the election. Nonetheless, he accepted the position.<sup>116</sup> Bishop Shamapani, acknowledging the spiritual character of Silungwe, expressed his discomfort at the conference rejecting Mudenda as a candidate. According to Shamapani, Mudenda was a decisive man and with a potential to lead. His written documents and sermons were good and at times are used in decision-making.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> H. F. Kipe, *Bishop's Report*, Missions Annual Report, 1977: 37.

<sup>115</sup> George Kibler, *Interview*, September 1999.

<sup>116</sup> W. Silungwe, *Interview*, August, 2002.

<sup>117</sup> E. Shamapani, (Bishop 1988-2002) *Interview*, September 1999.

### **6.10: Summary and Conclusion: Leadership Trends and the Leader that Never Was**

This chapter is a narrative of leadership trends of the Brethren in Christ Church in Zambia from 1960 to 1978, which represents that final episode before complete leadership turnover to indigenous Zambians was effected. The final frontier in achieving complete handover of leadership from missionaries to indigenous Christians was the election of an African bishop. Musser, the first Bishop of the autonomous Northern Rhodesia region once made a poignant reflection on the process of the development of indigenous church leadership in the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa.

What I saw there of independence was a spirit among the African people: 'we want to run our own country'. And so we felt that the church should co-operate and do the thing. And in as much as politically, the people had a mind for African leadership, so they probably had the same mind for leadership in the church.<sup>118</sup>

The strategy of developing and deploying African church leaders in the BICC in Africa was ambiguous and the nationalisation process was delayed. Bishop Musser was appointed in 1963 by the Board for World Mission, who had aimed at grooming national leaders to assume leadership in the church. It must be pointed out that as early as 1951, Zambian leaders had already started asking for leadership responsibilities as attested by Mudenda's famous question; 'When are we going to be ready to lead ourselves?' However, it was not until 1978 that the first Zambian would be elected as Bishop. From the inception of the BICC mission in Zambia in 1906 to the time of nationalisation, it took seventy-two (72) years to install an African bishop.

The first moves towards Africanisation of the church leadership in the BICC in Africa were actively embarked on in the early 1960s. This process was motivated by the political 'wind of change'. This era was a period of political liberation in Africa. The first African nation to gain independence was Ghana in 1958. In Central and Southern Africa, the major political trend of change had begun with the demise of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1963. The Africans had continued with the

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<sup>118</sup> J. E. Musser, *Interview*, June, 1999.

struggle against foreign European domination. There was an increased desire for African rule. The disintegration of the Federation paved the way for the immediate political independence of Malawi and Zambia. Zambia's independence was officially realised on 24<sup>th</sup> of October 1964. Unlike in Malawi and Zambia, the white minority settlers in Rhodesia, under the leadership of Ian Smith declared the illegal Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) against the wishes of both the British colonial government and the oppressed majority black indigenous people. The socio-political changes, namely the end of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Zambia's independence and the UDI in Rhodesia were major contributing factors to the increased pace of nationalisation of church leadership in Zambia, as demonstrated in this chapter.

The Brethren in Christ Mission leaders could not ignore this political wind of change. It was the demise of the Federation that compelled the Board for World Mission to create regional conferences led by bishops in Northern and Southern Rhodesia. For this reason, the Board for World Mission appointed the first Bishop for Northern Rhodesia.

Musser's attempt to prepare the indigenous Christians for the nationalisation of church leadership was demonstrated by his close working relationships with African overseers. During his term of office, he organised office and housing facilities for overseers on the mission station. He acknowledged the leadership capabilities of his African counterparts by his dependence on their knowledge of Tonga tradition and culture. Moreover, he had been anticipating that an African would succeed him as bishop. However, during the 1968 Bishop's election, the Church Executive Board nominated Frank Kipe for Bishop over against Mudenda, the African candidate. Frank Kipe though a missionary, was equally eligible for election as a bona fide member of the BICC in Africa. It must be pointed out that while Musser attempted to prepare Africans for future leadership, there did not seem to have been deliberate effort to prepare the missionaries for the same. That fact could explain the reason for the surprise election of Kipe as Bishop. It was taken for granted that missionaries would have leadership skills.

It must also be noted that on his first arrival in Zambia in 1954, Kipe was introduced to Africa and the African field by Mudenda. However, Kipe was later appointed

Superintendent of outschools and Educational Secretary. In both roles, Kipe was Mudenda's supervisor. Moreover, Kipe had supervised most of the African members of the Church Executive Board. Therefore, Kipe had the advantage of senior leadership experience. As rightly indicated by Musser, Kipe was an accomplished leader, although he was not the anticipated African replacement of Musser for the position of Bishop.

According to Graybill Brubaker, some of the leaders had preferred a missionary Bishop at the time. There was a sense of fear that missionaries would leave the church had they not been included in its senior leadership.<sup>119</sup> Closely related to the fear of the missionary departure was the financial insecurity of some of the African leaders. According to Kipe, Africans were still largely dependent on financial support from North America. There was a feeling for a long time among some African leaders that if they chose an African, financial support would be curtailed.<sup>120</sup>

At almost the same period when Kipe was being considered for the position of Bishop in 1967, the Brethren in Christ Church in India was undergoing a similar process of leadership turnover. Despite the fact that the indigenous Indian church members were exerting pressure for Harvey Sider to stand as chairperson of the church, he indicated that he would not be available to continue as chairperson that year. That decision compelled the Indian church to elect one of their own, thus setting in motion the nationalisation process of church leadership.<sup>121</sup> The Indian phenomenon contrasted the ongoing missionary role in senior church leadership in both Northern and Southern Rhodesia.

Bishop Kipe was elected for the second term of office as Bishop in 1973. Mudenda was also considered for that position. This was the second most senior church leadership position. It is worth noting that the Brethren in Christ Church in Rhodesia had already elected Philemon Kumalo as the first African Bishop in 1969. Mudenda and Kumalo were contemporaries. Kumalo became Bishop of the Church in Rhodesia 11 years before his country gained political independence in contrast to Zambia, which had already gained its independence seven years earlier.

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<sup>119</sup> G. Brubaker, *Interview*, June 1999.

<sup>120</sup> H. F. Kipe, *Interview*, June 1999.

<sup>121</sup> H. R. Sider, *From Mission To Church in India*, in E. M. Sider Ed. *Windows to the Church*, Brethren in Christ Historical Society, Grantham, 2003: 180.

It was mentioned in this chapter that Mudenda had been accused of being involved in witchcraft, a claim advanced for his illegibility for the position of Bishop. Despite unfounded rumours and allegations of such involvement, the church in Zambia appointed him as District Superintendent. Moreover, in 1975, Mudenda was appointed as the first Principal of Sikalongo Bible Institute. That same year, Mudenda was given a scholarship to attend Messiah College in North America as part of the ongoing training of the African leadership.

The Bishop's election of 1986 was the culmination of the process of nationalisation of church leadership in the Brethren in Christ in Zambia. In the mid-seventies, the government had been promoting the Zambianisation programme in all sectors of employment such as the civil service and the mining industry. At that time, the Board for World Mission, through Musser was proposing the nationalisation of all church official positions. Once again, the Church Executive vested with the authority of organising the Bishop's election convened the General Conference in 1976 at which Mudenda and Silungwe were nominated candidates. At this momentous election, Silungwe was elected as the first Zambian Bishop. Bishop Silungwe was later elected for the second term of office. However, at the end of his second term as Silungwe left the Brethren in Christ Church, and changed his church membership joining the Seventh Day Adventist Church.

As in other elections for the post of Bishop, Mudenda ended up as the unsuccessful candidate, *'a leader that never was'*. After twenty- three (23) years as an Overseer and several years as a bible college teacher, Mudenda returned to Sikalongo Bible Institute to prepare future leaders for the Brethren in Christ Church in Zambia. He was involved in both the residential and Theological Training by Extension programmes. He served in the Brethren in Christ Church until his death in 1980. Mudenda's continuing loyalty to the Brethren in Christ Church contrasts sharply with the defection of Silungwe, the church's former Zambian Bishop.

Mudenda could have most likely to be leader ready to be Bishop. The Bishop's elections, from the first one held in 1963, seem to demonstrate a process that eluded Mudenda the opportunity to ascend to the highest level of leadership in the Brethren in Christ Church in Zambia. The organisational and authority structure of the

Brethren in Christ Mission and Church had been a significant factor in the selection of leadership. In the initial phase, power and authority were vested in the Board for World Mission, previously known as the Foreign Mission Board. According to Arthur Climenhaga, when he was appointed as General Superintendent in 1949, the Foreign Mission Board gave him a directive, rather than a request or invitation to take up the field leadership.<sup>122</sup> Similarly during the appointment of Musser the first Bishop of the Brethren in Christ Church in Northern Rhodesia, the Board for World Mission had taken the decision with limited consultation with the Field Mission and Church Leadership. There was nevertheless a major paradigm shift of leadership structure in 1963 when the Africa field was divided in two autonomous regions led by two different Bishops rather than one General Superintendent answerable to the Board for World Mission. This can be seen as the first phase on the way towards the nationalisation of African church leadership.

While gradualism seemed to suit the missionary strategy of leadership turnover, Mudenda's famous question, 'when are we going to be ready to rule ourselves?' seems to suggest a level of readiness that went in part unnoticed by missionary leadership. Moreover, Mudenda was serving his second term of office as District Superintendent by 1963. However, at that stage as any other, the African church leaders had no mandate to assume any advanced leadership role. Therefore, left to the Board for World Mission and some mission leaders on the field who had the leadership hegemony, the Africans were considered to be not yet ready. For this reason, Musser was given the responsibility to prepare the Africans in Zambia for eventual leadership.

The second and third Bishop's elections were held in 1968 and 1973 respectively. In 1968, Frank Kipe another missionary was elected as Bishop. Musser's term of office by his own testimony had been deemed as a preparatory time for possible nationalisation of the position of Bishop. However, it did not happen as fast as he had expected, and hoped for. One other contributing factor was the fusion of mission and church, which gave Kipe the legitimate membership in the Brethren in Christ Church in Africa and therefore eligibility for election as Bishop. However, he also had the advantage of senior leadership experience and missionary status. Kipe supervised Mudenda while he worked as a teacher-pastor. Moreover, African perspective on

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<sup>122</sup> A. Climenhaga, *Interview*, June 1999.



western missionaries, impacted by colonial worldview, influenced them to favour Kipe who was presumed a better candidate with superior education and a link to continued financial resources. Incidentally, this phenomenon occurred in the post independence era of Zambia. In contrast, in the same year of 1967, a missionary leader, Harvey Sider, had just gone against popular indigenous wishes urging him to stand for the position of Chairperson, the equivalent of Bishop of the India Brethren in Christ Church. As for the Zambian Brethren in Christ Church, they not only elected Kipe once, but twice. Some Africans had feared that western missionaries might abandon the church and go back to North America for good, thus limiting the financial supply and other material support.

The fourth Bishop's elections were held in 1976 for the 1978 installation of the Zambian Bishop. The mid 1970s were hailed as the peak of the Zambianisation process in Zambia's employment sector. The civil service and mining sectors had made great strides in placing Zambians in strategic managerial positions. At that time, the Brethren in Christ Church in Zambia still had a missionary Bishop. Mudenda and Silungwe were both nominated for the position of Bishop at which Silungwe emerged as the first Zambian Bishop. Of the two candidates, Mudenda was more experienced and educated. However, he lacked the support of some influential missionaries and Africans. The church executive had the mandate to choose the one name that was presented to the General Conference for the final vote. Silungwe's neutral tribal standing aided his election in part as he emerged as a non-partisan candidate in the church with potential clan tension. Silungwe was not a fully-fledged Tonga person. His father was from the Bemba tribe from Northern Province as evidenced by his father's name, but his mother was Tonga by tribe. He was also regarded as a man of good spiritual character.

Incidentally, the planned Bishop's elections in 1976 seemed to have anticipated the election of an inexperienced candidate who later needed an extended time of transition and leadership handover. Mudenda did not seem to fit that category given his vast experience of having served for more than twenty years as an Overseer. The reported fears among some missionaries of desiring to sideline a man of stronger purpose-driven character and assertive demeanour could have been in part a more probable reason for Mudenda's unsuccessful attempt to not becoming Bishop.

This definitive Bishop's election of the first African bishop was just as vital to the African as it was to the missionary leadership. The missionary leadership, while purposing to allow the Africans to elect their own church leaders, had the significant role to monitor the outcome of the elections. The missionary leadership endorsed the choice of Silungwe. Silungwe would go on to serve two terms of office as Bishop of the Brethren in Christ Church in Zambia, but later resigned to join the Seventh Day Adventist Church. This change of membership had significant implications. It suggests that Silungwe's commitment to the Church's doctrinal standards was not complete. Such an action was at variance with the commitment and loyalty to one's church tradition demanded of a leader. It is not easy to reconcile the defection of a church leader in the highest office from the church. However, in the person of Mudenda, there also seemed to have been a potential leader in the history of the Brethren in Christ Church in Zambia, who never was.

## CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

### WESTERN MISSIONARY LEADERSHIP PATTERNS AND THE EMERGENCE OF AFRICAN LEADERS



*Plate # 9: From left to right, Davidson Mushala, Sampson Mudenda, Luke Keefer and Frank Kipe*

This thesis has explored examined the historical development of leadership in the Brethren in Christ Mission among the Tonga people of Zambia. It has investigated the North American missionary patterns of leadership in relation to the emergence of Zambian Church leaders. It has argued that the strategy of developing and deploying indigenous church leaders was ambiguous and that the process of handing over to a national leadership was delayed, as evidenced in part by the duration of the transition of leadership. Having begun in 1906, the BIC Mission finally handed over leadership to the Tonga Christians in 1978.

The study has utilised predominantly historical-narrative research methodology within the broad chronological outline of the period 1906-1978. Several factors were identified throughout which affected the four key stages of development: *entry*, *establishing*, *equipping*, and *handover*. These factors influenced the transition from Western missionary leadership to the eventual appointment of the first Zambian

Bishop. The most important of these factors were: shifts and changes in BIC missionary strategy throughout the period, socio-political dynamics, and the interplay between African and Western leadership patterns.

### ***BIC Mission Strategy and the Emergence of Indigenous Church Leadership.***

In considering the relationship between the BIC mission strategy and the emergence of indigenous church leadership, this thesis has attempted to answer the following over-arching question: what impact did the BIC mission strategy have on the development of Tonga Church leaders?

The dominant strategy in the *entry* and *establishing* stages was to utilise schools as a means of establishing local churches among the Tonga people. While conversion was essential throughout the four stages, the requirement of western education as a qualification for leadership became the norm for selection and appointment to significant leadership positions. In particular, leaders such as teacher-pastors at the *Establishing Stage*, Overseers at the *Equipping Stage* and the Bishop at the *Handover Stage* were required to have formal educational qualifications. The effect of this requirement at the *Establishing Stage* led to the deployment of teachers who also assumed a pastoral role on weekends. The expansion of church work became tied to the growth of the missionary school system and the availability of sufficient teacher-pastors. Linking the role of teacher to the role of pastor meant that one person carried the burden of double duties, which was equivalent to two full time jobs. This also meant that where there was no school there was no church.

At this stage also, greater status was attached to the teacher-pastor role than to other Church leadership positions such as deacons and evangelists because of the formal training and subsequent sphere of influence the position carried. However, over time and with church expansion, it became clear that the dual nature of this role weakened the pastoral sphere of the work. Those in the role of teacher-pastor were soon over stretched because of the demands placed on them by their teaching commitments

during the week. Thus, the role of pastor was limited in its operation, and restricted in its development.

The inadequacies of the educational strategy for establishing new churches were clearly recognised during the *establishing stage*, which led the missionary leadership to introduce the Bible School scheme. A broader range of educational opportunities was initiated to enhance and supplement the equipping of church leaders among the Tonga. This was further developed in the 1970s through the TEE programme. The overriding emphasis on formal education and training was still very much in evidence, whereby the completion of the Bible School programme was a requirement for ordination and a pre-requisite for the appointment of the Bishop.

While formal education served the purposes of the mission leadership structures, there is little evidence to suggest that the missionary leaders negotiated a positive relationship with the prevailing Tonga educational and traditional leadership values. The Tonga educational model was largely community centred, informal and valued relational skills. The mission educational model was generally an adapted North American one, which was predominantly academic, individualistic, and formal. This in part contributed to the slow pace of the indigenisation process of leadership, as the Tonga Christians had to demonstrate that they could conform to a western educational pattern with structures and processes foreign to them. However, there were exceptions to the missionary leadership styles, such as Myron Taylor's close relation with Peter Munsaka that resulted in the first Deacon at Sikalongo in the Establishing stage. Another exception was Earl Musser's mentoring relationship with Mudenda in both the Equipping and the Hand-over stages.

Despite the drawbacks, the strategy of mission through education was instrumental in the initiation of new mission work in Northern Rhodesia. The school based strategy allowed female missionaries (educationalists) to venture out unaccompanied by male missionaries at the *Entry stage*. However, despite the courageous drive, singular vision, academic qualifications and proven ability of these women in establishing a mission station and schools, their sphere of influence and their leadership roles were neither formally recognised nor fully acknowledged by the predominantly male

missionary leadership of the BIC. This was evidenced by the appointment of Myron Taylor to assume leadership at Macha Mission, which reinforced the male dominated leadership of BIC mission philosophy of leadership as discussed in Chapter three. The leadership tensions between Davidson and Taylor led later to Davidson's departure from the mission field. Furthermore, most key positions of influence including ordination were restricted to male BIC missionaries.

The male-oriented leadership style of the BIC mission mirrored the Tonga traditional leadership structures, which were also highly patriarchal. As evidenced in Chapter two, although the Tonga people were matrilineal in succession, they were patriarchal in their traditional leadership patterns and structures. Therefore, women were not readily considered for leadership. After the departure of Davidson from Macha Mission, the research sources provide no subsequent evidence of the emergence of females to significant leadership roles nor of any deliberate empowerment of women to access senior positions within the BIC mission in Zambia. One can conclude that in the interaction between Western missionary and Tonga traditional leadership patterns, there were no mechanisms in either system to challenge their predominantly male hierarchy.

### ***Colonialism and Nationalism and the Emergence of Indigenous Church Leadership.***

Colonial administration was an ideal ally to the Brethren in Christ mission work among the Tonga people of Zambia. The presence of colonial officials enabled the *entry stage* to be negotiated with ease. It is probable that from the Tonga perspective, the association of the BIC mission with the colonial administration raised the profile of the missionaries to the same level of superiority and authority as the colonial officials. Missionaries were perceived by the Tonga people as authority figures. This was evidenced in the pattern of acquiring land for establishing mission stations. Although colonial officials were not the indigenous owners of the land, missionaries gained land permits from them rather than first approaching Tonga Chiefs, the rightful indigenous owners of the land.

In the 1920s, the colonial administration favoured mission education as a means of the further development of Northern Rhodesia. While the standard of education



varied considerably, the colonial officials and mission agencies used the education of the indigenous for their own desired goals of developing civil service personnel and helping the Tonga to read the Bible, respectively. The financial assistance offered by the colonial administration for education enhanced the BIC mission emphasis on doing mission through establishing churches based on a school system. This resulted in an over dependency on teacher-pastors who struggled to fulfil their dual roles.

The rise of nationalism in the 1950s in Northern Rhodesia was the principal factor that triggered the process of appointing Tonga Christians to the senior church position of *Overseer* in the BIC mission. Against the background of mounting nationalistic opposition to the establishment of the Federation in the early fifties, one can surmise that Mudenda's questioning of BIC mission leadership strategy might well have been influenced by the political questioning of the day. But it can be equally argued that the yearning for leadership by the indigenous Christians was in reality the quest for ecclesiastical liberation. Mudenda's challenge to the BIC mission regarding their perception of the state of readiness for leadership among the indigenous Christians reveals that power and authority for the advancement of the African Christian leaders were viewed by the majority to be vested in the missionaries. His direct challenge to this perception contributed to the move to appoint the first two Overseers (District Superintendents) in Zambia.

With the advent of political independence in several African countries in the 1960's, the Board for World Mission in North America realised the need to appoint a national to the position of Bishop in Zambia. They encouraged the mission leadership on the field to implement the indigenisation process. Missionaries had both the key responsibility and the greater power to prepare for and facilitate this important transition. However, there was a mixed and ambiguous response to this proposition as evidenced by the delay of over seven decades from its inception in the appointment of a Zambian Bishop in spite of the availability of at least one suitable Zambian candidate who, although nominated at three consecutive elections in the 60s and 70s was never elected. One can conclude from the mixed and ambiguous response by the field missionary staff that the eventual appointment of a Zambian Bishop in 1978 was more a response to outside factors than to a theological or missiological conviction or principle. In contrast to the perpetuation of western

missionary leadership in Zambia, the BICC missionaries in India gave the indigenous Christians an early opportunity to lead the church. A case in point was Harvey Sider who resigned as chairperson of the BICC in India in the 1960's and gave way for an indigenous church leader to assume that position. Moreover, the BIC Mission who should have had a better theological basis for early nationalisation of indigenous leadership were overtaken by the pace of political independence. This was in contrast to the BIC church in Zimbabwe where the nationalisation of Church leadership preceded political independence.

### ***Leadership Pattern: American or African?***

In general, the BIC mission leaders negotiated only very occasionally with Tonga traditional leaders regarding village visitations and the opening of new schools for children. The primary research sources offer no evidence of ongoing interaction of BIC mission leaders with the indigenous leadership. On the whole, the BIC contact with Tonga traditional leadership was functional rather than a positively creative one of mutual interaction.

The BIC mission leadership would have benefited from closer encounter with Tonga traditional leadership had they prioritised mutual interaction. The research has shown that leadership patterns among the Tonga were characterised by a strong emphasis on values such as age, experience, and finely honed relational skills. On the part of the BIC mission, their leadership pattern generally placed academic qualification, be it secular or theological, over and above more relational leadership values. Many of the positive cultural traits of the Tonga were not taken on board by the BIC Mission when developing church leaders. There was a tacit recognition of Tonga traditional leadership and culture when necessary, however, the values inherent to their leadership structures were overlooked.

### ***The Need for Further Research***

It has been assumed that the election of the first Zambian Bishop in 1978 marked the culmination of the indigenisation process. However, only future research will ascertain the nature and characteristic of the post-mission indigenous leadership. Further research will determine whether what took place in the 1978 election for Bishop was merely African replacement of missionary leadership or true

indigenisation. Authentic indigenisation should be characterised by both leadership transfer and evident indigenous identity. While the transfer of leadership occurred in 1978, its authenticity will only be ascertained by the type of leadership that emerges during the post-missionary era. It will be necessary to inquire how indigenous leaders would operate in a western oriented church structure. Ownership and identity of the church and its administrative structure would be essential elements of authentic indigenisation of both the church and its leadership.

While the missionary contribution to the emergence of indigenous leaders among the Tonga people has been identified, further research will be necessary to explore the indigenous contribution to the development of missionary leaders. It is significant when observed against the backdrop of several missionaries assuming ecclesiastical leadership on their return from the mission field to their sending churches. This thesis has revealed that missionary leaders often returned to North America and assumed key ecclesiastical positions. Some examples include Arthur Climenhaga, who left the mission field having served as General Superintendent of Northern and Southern Rhodesia. He was appointed to head the Church's only Liberal Arts College, Messiah College and later became President of the National Association of Evangelicals in North America. Another example was Frank Kipe who served as Bishop for two terms and returned to become a lecturer and Bishop of one of the North American conferences. For this reason, it will be worthwhile to explore the influence and contribution of the Tonga Christians on the development of American missionary leaders who returned better equipped to assume significant church leadership roles. It is significant to do such a study against the backdrop of a colonial era with its general assumptions and perspectives about the indigenous people as subordinates to western leadership.

This thesis has also described the precarious role of women and mission leadership. Davidson and Engle, founders of Macha Mission, the birthplace of the Brethren in Christ Church in Zambia faced numerous challenges in a male missionary dominated leadership structure. Given the numbers of female missionaries proportionate to their male counterparts and their leadership capabilities, future research will need to consider the role and participation of both missionary and indigenous women in ecclesiastical leadership. Such a study should seek to explore the extent to which

indigenous church leadership addressed the matter regarding the continuous sidelining of women in the Brethren in Christ Church in Zambia.

This thesis has concluded that while continuity and stability of local churches depended on the establishment of indigenous church leaders, the pace of nationalisation of church leadership was slow. Moreover, the handover of leadership from missionaries to indigenous Christians was not generally planned, but rather largely prompted by the prevailing nationalistic political climate of the 1950's and 1960's and the indigenous desire for self- leadership. While revealing that the power and authority to promote indigenous church leaders rested in the hands of BIC Mission leadership, this thesis has also provided evidence that indigenous Christians played an equally significant role in urging the missionaries to hand over leadership.

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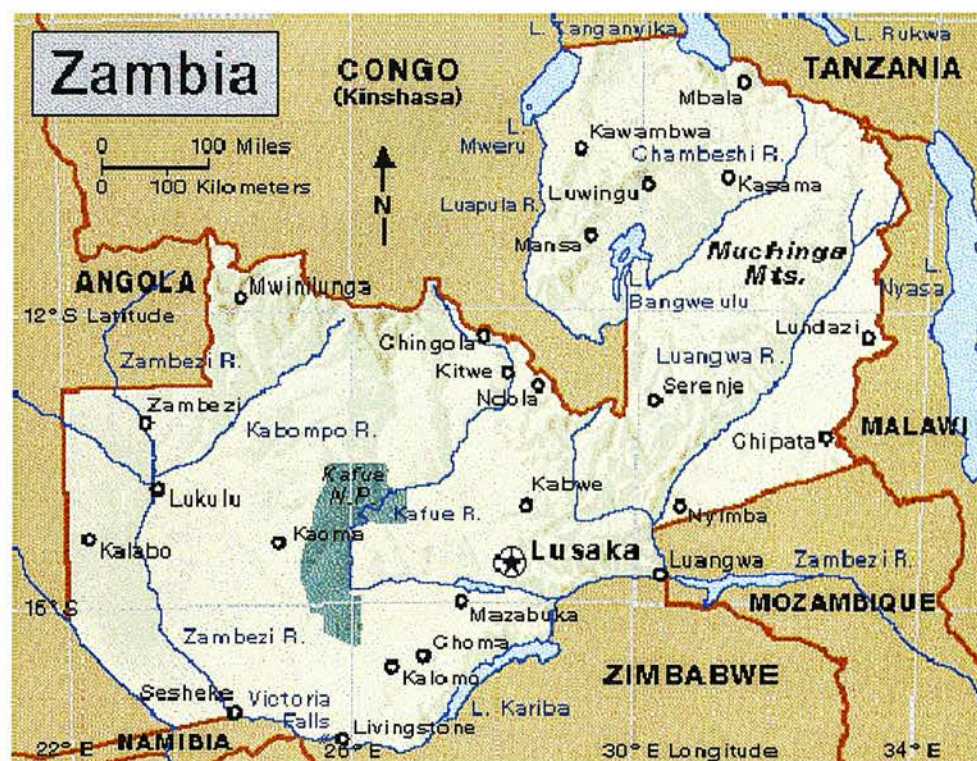
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Map 1: Map Showing Major Towns of Zambia

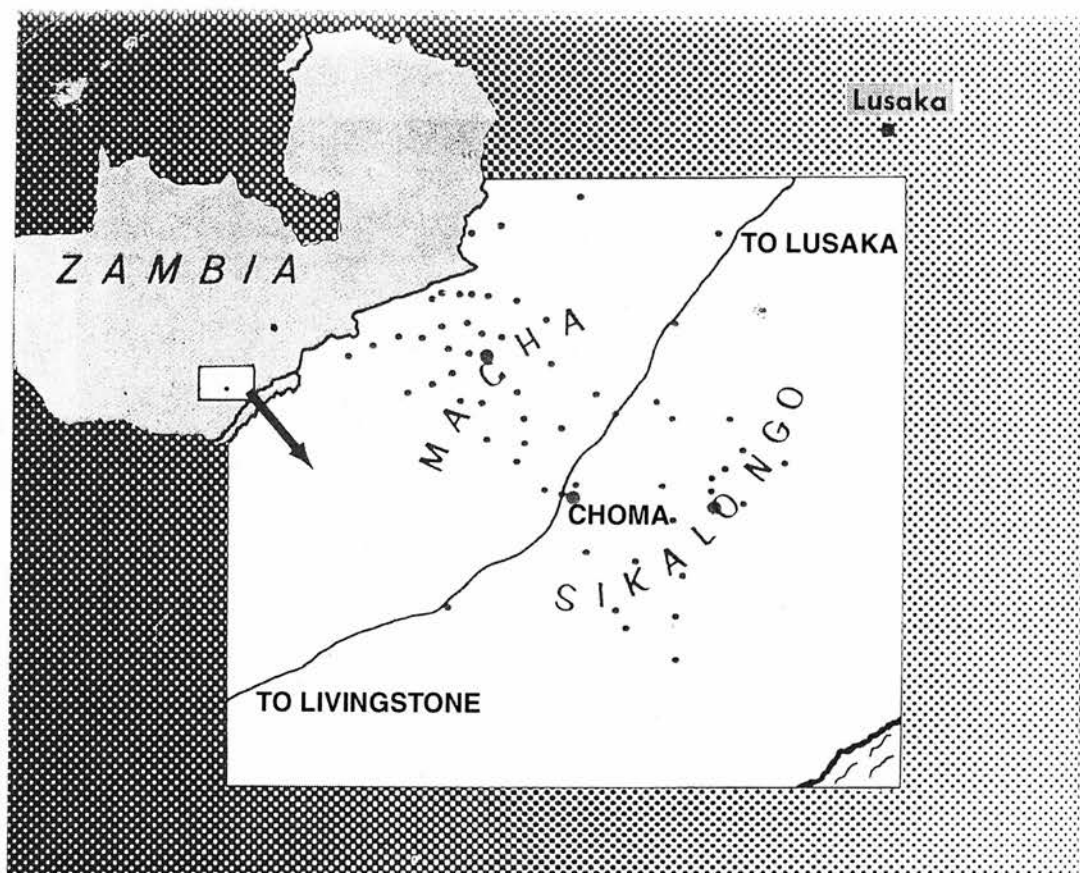


Source: Encyclopaedia Britannica

TRIBAL AND LINGUISTIC MAP  
OF ZAMBIA



*Map 3: Map Showing Macha and Sikalongo Mission*



*Source: Messiah BIC Archives, Messiah College, Grantham, USA.*

### ARTICLE XI. Regulations Concerning African Ministers.

This article was presented to Conference as from a committee consisting of all the missionary brethren on the Field, and was accepted with additions from Conference. The regulations follow: -

#### A. STATEMENT CONCERNING ORDINATION AND STATUS.

It is recognised that the ordination of Africans calls for some special provisions and an outline of duties and privileges inasmuch as this is a new development. There are also other implications because of the inter-relation with the European missionaries. We find it difficult to define fully at this time all the points which may need clarification. It will be wisdom on our part to go carefully and slowly in the granting of privileges and assigning of duties for we are establishing precedents with these three men who are tried and trusted which will carry over to men of the future who are unknown to us.

We shall wish to dedicate ourselves to this project with a sincere desire to bring it to fruitful service and blessing for the African Church. In doing this we shall need much wisdom, patience, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

#### I. GOVERNING REGULATIONS FROM THE FOREIGN MISSION BOARD

##### 1. Ordination of African Ministers

In respect to examination of Native Overseers in Rhodesia before ordination:

- a. On motion it was decided that the Field Executive Board is hereby authorised to give such necessary examinations as may be deemed advisable.
- b. It was further decided that their ordination shall be for a life, subject to good behaviour, ability, and efficient service.
- c. Their tenure of office shall be for five years, subject to reappointment.
- d. The ordination and appointments shall be in charge of the Field Executive Board.

##### 2. Status of African Ministers

Whereas the organisation of the African Church presents some new conditions and problems which require clarification beyond that which may be contained in the Constitution and By-Laws of the Church in America, and

Whereas, the status of the ordained African Over-



seer is not defined as it concerns their position in the Church as a whole and his relation to the Missionaries and the African Church,

Therefore, be it RESOLVED that the following sections be set down as clarifying and defining the position of the ordained African Overseer.

- a. The status of the ordained overseer in the African Church shall be that of an ordained minister as is outlined in the Constitution and By-Laws of the Brethren in Christ Church, Sections 1 - 5, Article 30, as adopted by General Conference of 1941, or as may be amended from time to time; and he shall enjoy all the privileges and be bound by the conditions of these sections.
- b. When assigned the responsibilities of an overseer, the African Minister is authorised to perform such duties as are now outlined in the Constitution and By-Laws of the Church and those determined by the African Conference. The above-mentioned duties are subject to amendment by the governing bodies as the needs of the work require.
- c. When a minister is not serving as an overseer of an assigned district he shall retain only his ministerial privileges as outlined in Section 2, Article 30, Constitution and By-Laws of the Brethren in Christ Church (1941). Nothing in this paragraph is intended to authorise any person to serve as a minister should he be otherwise disqualified.

#### B. OUTLINE OF DUTIES AND PROCEDURE

1. The ordained African Minister shall be given the title 'Reverend' in English and 'Umfundisi' in Sindebele.
2. He shall be used in administering Communion according to the discretion of the General Superintendent.
3. He shall be given the opportunity to assist in administering baptism according to the discretion of the General Superintendent.
4. He may officiate at the dedication of church buildings as may be arranged by the General Superintendent.
5. He shall be appointed a marriage officer for the Colony of Southern Rhodesia and shall perform marriages according to the following paragraphs.
  - a. For the present, couples to be married shall come through the person in charge of the outstation to the European Missionary, who shall send the couple to the African Minister who shall ~~send the couple~~ then make arrangements for the marriage and marry them.
  - b. As far as possible weddings shall be performed at the outstation from which the bridegroom comes, and shall be performed when the minister is visiting the outstation. In cases where a girl of our Society wishes to marry a young man from another Society and the couple wish to be married by our African Minister, this may be done at the girl's home outstation.
  - c. The African Minister when serving as an overseer shall have certain outstations allocated to him by the Executive Board from which places he shall perform the marriages. When the African Minister is not serving as overseer the Executive Board may make such arrangements re marriages as deemed best.
  - d. All wedding fees shall be paid into the Proacher's Fund. (This is to apply to fees received by European marriage officers as well.)

## Appendix 2

### GRADUATES OF SIKALONGO BIBLE INSTITUTE

1969

William Silungwe  
Jonathan C. Mwaalu  
Moses Munsaka

1970

Andreaah Moono

1971

Koss Mudenda  
Mususa Tinware

1972

Soloni Sibooli  
Timothy Munsanje  
Daniel Muchinda

1973

Joseph Siamugande  
Lot Muunda  
Robinson Mudenda  
Champion Muchimba

1974

Bina Grace Moono

1975

Lazarous Muleya  
Stephen Moyo  
Moses Muleya  
George Hamsano

1977

Thuma Hamukang'andu  
Edward Muleya  
Charles Mubelesi  
Joseph Munsaka  
Richard Mukonka

1978

Swellaah Munkombwe  
Bernard Mwaanga  
Weldy Mseemani  
Andrew Mainza  
Winheck Moyo

1979

Samuel Muntanga  
John Mweetwa  
Fredrick Chipwaza

1980

Moses Munsaka  
Peter Mayoba  
Henry Muntanga

1981

Leonard Namasele  
Jonah Simisamu  
Daniel Mwanza  
Athlon Muchanga  
Alick Lusimbo  
MacDonald Mucheng'i

1983

Leonard Munkombwe  
Lebster Muunga  
George Bichiinde  
Bedays Muleya

1984

Wilfred Mombwana  
Pines Simunene  
Elisa Munsaka  
Dick Mbewe

1985

Solomoni Malawo  
Maureen Mudenda  
Alexis Bikwanzala

1986

Harrison Babanda  
Jacob Muchimba  
Kennedy Chabakola

1989

John Mbobela  
Charles Mayembe  
Lariss Bikszova

1990

Peter Nyirenda  
Light Chileshe  
Paul Sispande  
Phinias Bizimbya

1991

Mirth Munyese  
Treck Mukoko  
Douglas Muzya

1992

1992

Tarman Haziya  
Moses Lemba  
Ephraim Mweene

1993

Britius Lubasi  
Lawrence Mudeene  
Lameck Simwale  
Ephraim Siatambika  
Chalton Samboko

1994

Douglas Mweene  
Obad Madinke

1995

Phanuel Munelula  
Henry Choonga  
Isack Malupepe  
Nelson Malawo

1996

Elijah Moono  
Godfrey Muleya  
Marshall Mudenda  
Theresah Muntanya

1997

Hopeday Botani  
Voster Siamunyati  
Alvin Munkombwe

1998

Charles Muunga  
Daniel Njins  
Jones Nambala  
Benny Muleya



APPENDICES TO CONFERENCE MINUTES  
1957  
APPENDIX 3. WANEZI BIBLE INSTITUTE PROSPECTUS

GENERAL INFORMATION

HISTORY AND PURPOSE OF THE INSTITUTE

From its first inception the Holy Scriptures have had a vital part in the teaching ministry of the Brethren in Christ Missions in Africa. "We believe that every Christian should know his Bible better than any other book." With this as our objective, the place of Bible training has continued to increase.

For a number of years a vernacular Bible class was organised for the instruction of evangelists and other Church leaders. The school was then known as the Wanezi Bible School. Across the years the African Church has experienced a steady and wholesome growth. In making plans for the greater development of the indigenous church, the church felt the need for a more advanced Bible training for the leaders of the African Church. Providentially we believe God has provided the facilities and personnel in answer to this need. With the opening of the first year of this course on January 17, 1956, the name of the Bible School was changed to the Wanezi Bible Institute.

NAME AND DESIGN OF THE ADVANCED COURSE

The title of the course shall be The Theological Course of the Wanezi Bible Institute. The course shall cover for the present a two year span and shall be so designed that there can be an annual intake of students. Thus the subjects for each year shall be completed in that year, but shall also be a part of the total two year programme. The ultimate goal is for a three year course.

FACILITIES OF THE BIBLE INSTITUTE

At present the facilities are quite adequate and in good condition. A new men's dormitory was completed in 1956. This is equipped to house at least twelve men. The kitchen and dining room are housed in the same building for convenience. Another building is adequately equipped with class rooms and offices. When the rooms are not being used for classes, students have access to them for study and reading purposes. Several hundred volumes of books are available for study. There are limited housing facilities for married couples. Arrangements for such should be made in advance.

EXPENSES AT WANEZI BIBLE INSTITUTE

The estimated expenses listed below cover registration fees, room, simple food, and mimeographed materials for the class work.

1. Theological Course - £15 per year.
2. Intermediate Bible Course - £14 per year.
3. Vernacular Course - £6 per year.

However, if Brethren in Christ students come with a good recommendation, and can give evidence of financial need, for Theological Students a bursary of twelve pounds (£12) may be arranged; for Intermediate Course Students a bursary of twelve pounds (£12); and for the Vernacular Course a bursary of five pounds (£5).

With pupils in good standing of other denominations, where the extra costs can be sponsored by bursaries from such societies, the same remaining school fees will apply. For those not sponsored by another denomination, special consideration will be given according to the circumstances.

There are other minor expenses such as text books, note books, pens and pencils. A limited amount of opportunity is given for work to help with these expenses.

PRACTICAL WORK

The practical aspects of the Christian training and service in the Bible Institute is given careful consideration and supervision. Throughout the school year students are given the opportunity to engage in the following types of work: prayer meetings in the community, village visitation, teaching Sunday School classes, preaching appointments, and Gospel Team programmes. In all these activities a personal soul-winning emphasis is given.

Conference, 1957, Appendices, page 2

APPENDIX A, Wanezi Bible Institute Prospectus, cont'd.  
RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Chapel services are conducted one half-hour, five days a week. These sessions consist of singing, Bible reading with brief comments, and prayer. One hour each week the students join with the community in a mid-week prayer meeting. On Sunday the students meet in the main church to share with the community in the fellowship of the Sunday School and Worship service.

STUDENT REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to furnish their own blanket or blankets, towels, and soap. Christian modesty of dress is to be observed at all times. Each student is expected to work approximately one hour each school day. Students should provide themselves with clothes suitable for practical work. All students are required to attend all classes, study periods, religious services and any other assigned activities, unless properly excused. All excuses, as well as absences from the mission are to be arranged in advance.

APPLICATION

A special application form is to be filled out by each student. Before filling out the application form the student should read carefully and prayerfully all the information of this prospectus. Applications should be made as early as possible for careful consideration of each applicant. All correspondence should be addressed to the Principal, Wanezi Bible Institute, P.B. 129 'S', Bulawayo.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The satisfactory completion of prescribed courses and with a passing mark in each subject. An approved Christian character that the Institute can recommend for Christian service. There must be a satisfactory settlement for expenses.

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS TO THE THEOLOGICAL COURSE

The entrance requirements for this course shall be the equivalency of Junior Secondary or Teacher Training Courses. A few exceptions may be made to the above standards, if in the opinion of the Bible Institute Committee, the applicant gives evidence of spiritual and scholastic maturity and stability, and can show that he has an adequate command of English to derive benefit from the course.

SYLLABUS

First Year

<u>First Term</u>	
3	General Epistles
2	Gospel of Mark
3	Church History
2	Pastoral Theology
3	Systematic Theology
2	Pentateuch
2	Psalms
2	Elective
19	Hours

<u>Second Term</u>	
3	Life of Christ
2	Galatians and I and II Thessalonians
3	Church History
2	Pastoral Theology
3	Systematic Theology
2	Pentateuch
2	Historical Books
2	Elective
19	Hours

Second Year

<u>First Term</u>	
3	Introduction to Bible
2	Major Prophets
3	Poetical Books
2	Homiletics and Preaching
3	Prison Epistles
2	Evangelism
2	Hebrews
2	Church Administration (Lectures)
2	Elective
21	Hours

<u>Second Term</u>	
3	Introduction to the Bible
2	Minor Prophets
3	I and II Corinthians
2	Homiletics and Preaching
2	Revelation
2	Missions
2	Romans
1	First-Aid
2	Elective
19	Hours

\*Elective - Bible, Religious Education, Music, English, Handcraft, 8 hours.

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS TO INTERMEDIATE BIBLE COURSE

This two-year intermediate Bible course is designed for students not qualified for the advanced Bible course but too



## Appendix 3c

### APPENDIX A, KWANEZI BIBLE INSTITUTE PROSPECTUS, cont'd.

advanced for the present Vernacular course. It will open up the way for further service and Bible training for our African youth. This course will begin January, 1958, with entrance requirements as post-Standard Six or an equivalent knowledge of English.

#### SYLLABUS

##### First Year

<u>First Term</u>	
2	Gospel of Mark
3	General Epistles
3	Bible Doctrines
2	Pastoral Work
2	Pentateuch
2	Psalms
3	New Testament Survey
3	Old Testament History
	Music
20	Hours

##### Second Year

3	Introduction to the Bible
2	Major Prophets
2	Preaching
3	Poetical Books
3	Prison Epistles
2	Hebrews
3	Church History
2	Electives
20	Hours

#### THE VERNACULAR BIBLE COURSE

This is a two year Bible course consisting of two short terms yearly, each term being nine weeks. This course is designed for those persons who speak the vernacular language. It is open for pastors, evangelists, deacons, and any others who wish to enrich their lives and ministry through the study of the Word of God under Christian environment.

#### SYLLABUS

<u>First Term</u>		<u>Second Term</u>	
3.45	Introduction to the Bible	3.45	O. T. Survey
3.45	Bible Doctrine	3.45	Bible Doctrine
3.45	Pastoral Training	3.45	Evangelism
3.45	Book of Acts	3.45	Book of Acts or other book study
2.30	Bible Book Study		
.30	B. in C. Doctrine and Practice	.30	B. in C. Doctrine and Practice
.30	Modern Error		
.30	Methods for Class Meetings	.30	Modern Error
1.00	Church and Missions History	1.00	Church and Mission History
	Music		Music
20.00	Hours	20.00	Hours

##### Second Year

3.45	N.T. Survey	3.45	Soul-Winning
3.45	Bible Doctrine	3.45	Bible Doctrine
3.45	O.T. History and Biography	3.45	O.T. History and Biography
3.45	Gospel of Mark		
2.30	Bible Book Study	3.45	General Epistles
.30	B. in C. Doctrine and Practice	2.30	Bible Book Study
1.00	Preaching	.30	B. in C. Doctrine and Practice
2.00	Electives		
	Music	1.00	Preaching
21.00	Hours	2.00	Electives
			Music
		21.00	Hours

## Appendix 4

### Guide Lines for the Relationship of the Church in Africa and the Board for World Missions

#### Bishops of the Church to the Board for World Missions.

- A. The Bishops shall have access to the Board for World Missions through the Executive Board.
- B. It shall be the responsibility of the Executive Board Chairman to transmit the request of the church in Africa to the Board for World Missions.
- C. It shall be the further responsibility of the Executive Board Chairman to provide the Board for World Missions with minutes of Executive Board meetings, and to provide the Board for World Missions with adequate financial and statistical reports as may be required.
- D. It shall be the responsibility of the Regional Bishops to report to the Board for World Missions regional activities e.g.\*Regional Conferences, Church Executive Committee activities, Spiritual Life Conferences, and to provide materials of promotional value.
- E. It shall be the responsibility of the Chairman of General Conference to provide the Board for World Missions with minutes and reports of the activities of General Conference.

#### Field Chairman to the Board for World Missions and Church in Africa.

- A. To serve as Chairman of Field Committee.
- B. To speak in behalf of the housing, health, and happiness of the missionary when necessary.
- C. To represent the Board for World Missions in Africa.
- D. To speak in behalf of and represent the missionaries and the Board for World Missions in finance areas definitely related to the missionary, such as allowances, salaries, local leaves and furloughs, transportation, missionary-earned grants.
- E. To keep the Board for World Missions informed regarding general church matters, church progress and other business of the church in Africa.
- F. Counseling with missionaries shall be a responsibility of the Field Chairman.
- G. To make recommendations to Executive Board regarding missionary assignments, but actual placement is the responsibility of the Executive Board.
- H. To be responsible to Executive Board for his own missionary assignment.

#### II. Field Chairman to the Regional Bishops and Missionaries.

- A. In case of emergency assignments of missionary or overseas personnel, the Executive Board Chairman in consultation with the other Regional Bishop and the Field Chairman shall assume responsibility for these temporary placements.
- B. Counseling with missionaries shall be the responsibility of the Bishops; sometimes coordinated counseling with the Field Chairman may be desirable.
- C. It shall be the responsibility of the Field Chairman and the Regional Bishops to keep open lines of communication for unity and mutual understanding.
- D. The Field Chairman shall be kept informed by receiving copies of staff minutes, circulars, calendars and special programmes, etc.

APPENDIX A. JOB DESCRIPTION, BISHOP, B. I. C. C. ZAMBIA GENERAL CONFERENCE.

Job Summary: He shall serve as administrative head of the Church and its related ministries, with particular attention to the spiritual life of the congregations and the spiritual aspects of the Church's service ministries.

Job Duties:

1. General charge of the districts as assigned to him by the General Conference, keeping before the Church up-to-date, relevant and attainable objectives and goals.
2. Oversee the work of the District Superintendents:
  - a. Keeping them aware of their responsibilities and standards of performance.
  - b. Helping them to perform their official functions in the Church.
  - c. Planning with them for all the activity programmes of the Church.
3. Oversee the work of his immediate subordinates:
  - a. Keeping them aware of their responsibilities and standards of performance.
  - b. Encouraging them to adjust programmes where necessary to meet the present needs of the Church.
  - c. Planning with them to meet the future needs of the Church.
4. Co-ordinate the implementation of decisions of General Conference and Executive Board.
5. Correspond with the Board for Missions on general church matters, church growth progress, financial matters and other business of the Church in Zambia and keep the Church in Zambia fully informed of current thinking and emphases of the Church in America.
6. Insure uniformity of teaching and practice in Biblical doctrine, conduct and discipline.
7. Provide for effective evangelistic outreach, follow-up and membership preparation.
8. Provide for adequate nurture and service opportunity for all members.
9. Insure the adequate staffing for the Church's various ministries by recruitment and training of both missionary and national personnel through the Field Secretary for missionary staff and through the Institutional Heads for national and other overseas personnel.
10. Seek to keep the programme, life and emphases of the Church relevant to the needs of the present day.
11. Seek to relate the spiritual life and growth of the Church to that of other evangelical churches in harmony and cooperation without compromise of doctrine and standards.
12. Provide for adequate and efficient administration to insure the confidence and loyalty of all members and motivate them to contribute their best toward meeting the objectives and goals of the Church.
13. Provide for adequate dissemination of all relevant information, news and decisions of the Church to insure an informed and knowledgeable membership.
14. Serve in any capacity as time and ability may provide for, in duties as may be required by the conferences, boards and committees of the Church.

Organizational Relationships:

The Bishop shall be responsible to Executive Board and General Conference. He shall be responsible for duties assigned by the above. He shall serve as Chairman of General Conference and Executive Board and be responsible for the implementation of their decisions within the General Conference.

He shall be responsible for the administrative effectiveness of all personnel in congregational and institutional assignments, both national and missionary, through his immediate subordinates.

The Bishop should, in as far as possible, delegate responsibility to his immediate subordinates. His immediate subordinates shall be:

## APPENDIX A. Organizational Relationships (continued)

District Superintendents	Mission Station co-ordinators
Bible School Principal	Financial Secretary
TEE Co-ordinator	Standing Committee Chairmen
Bookroom Manager	Special Committee Chairmen
Hospital Administrator	Other Committee Chairmen
Education Secretary	Field Secretary

His sub-immediate subordinates shall be: (administrative matters with these should be handled through immediate subordinates)  
Pastors, Evangelists and other church officials, Bible School teachers and other Bible School staff, TEE teachers and other TEE staff, Bookroom staff and other Bookroom employees, Doctors, nurses and other Hospital staff, School Heads, teachers and other school employees, mission station staff and other employees, treasurers of all church and institutional funds, committee members.

Administrative matters should be dealt with through the normal channels regardless of whether the person involved is national or missionary, i.e. missionaries have no special administrative privilege.

### Qualifications:

1. The Bishop shall be an ordained minister in the Brethren in Christ Church.
2. He shall have a strong church loyalty coupled with a sound doctrinal understanding of the teachings and disciplines of the Church.
3. He shall have the administrative ability to insure the adequate and efficient use and handling of personnel, funds and properties of the Church.
4. He, with his wife, shall possess such personal qualities which would enable them to counsel effectively on matters of finance, personal and family relationships and spiritual life with the total constituency.
5. He, with his wife, shall provide a headquarters hospitality and friendship standard that will enhance the reputation and image of the Church and make all who come and go feel welcome and comfortable.

### Training and Development:

1. The Bishop shall be alert and attentive to new trends and thinking within the Church and throughout Christendom.
2. He should be a diligent student of the Word and apt to teach others.
3. He should study to improve his own skills and develop his talents in order to better administer the life and growth of the Church.
4. He should, where possible, take advantage of in-service training by courses, seminars and institutes to keep spiritually and mentally ahead of the people he must lead.

## APPENDIX B. JOB DESCRIPTION, FIELD SECRETARY, B. I. C. C. ZAMBIA.

Job Summary: He shall be responsible for the personal care of missionaries in Zambia. He shall negotiate with the Board for Missions on behalf of the Church in Zambia on matters of recruitment, travel, tenure and conditions of service in regard to missionary personnel.

### Job Duties:

1. To represent the Board for Missions to missionaries in Zambia.
2. To speak on behalf of the missionary, when necessary, in matters of housing, health and general well-being.
3. To speak on behalf of and represent the missionaries and the Board for Missions in finance areas definitely related to the missionary, such as allowances, salaries, local leaves and furloughs, transportation and children's education.
4. To correspond with the Board for Missions on matters related to missionary personnel.
5. To counsel with missionaries, as necessary, on such matters as health, holiday and furlough travel arrangements and documents, unit household finance and furnishings, children's education, personal decorum and also to give spiritual encouragement.



APPENDIX B. Job Duties, continued.

6. To make recommendations to Executive Board regarding missionary assignments, but actual placement is the responsibility of the Executive Board.

7. To be responsible to Executive Board for his own missionary assignment.

Organizational Relationships:

The Field Secretary shall be responsible to the Bishop in Zambia and to the Board for Missions in America.

In his role as Field Secretary he shall have no subordinates in Zambia, aside from office secretarial help as may be necessary.

His role as Field Secretary with missionaries and Executive Board in matters concerning job assignments is advisory not administrative.

In his role as Field Secretary he has no administrative or advisory function with national personnel.

Qualifications:

1. He shall have a strong Church loyalty coupled with a sound doctrinal understanding of the teachings and disciplines of the Church.
2. He shall have the experience, ability and tact to help the missionary to work and witness effectively in cross-cultural circumstances.
3. He, with his wife, shall possess such personal qualities which would enable them to counsel effectively on matters of finance, personal relationships and spiritual life.

Training and Development:

1. The Field Secretary shall be alert and attentive to new trends and thinking within the Church and throughout Christendom.
2. He should be a diligent student of the Word and apt to teach others.
3. He should study to improve his own skills and develop his talents.
4. He should, where possible, take advantage of in-service training by courses, seminars and institutes to keep spiritually and mentally alert.

APPENDIX C. DIVISION OF DUTIES, BISHOP AND FIELD SECRETARY.

Guide for division of duties between Bishop and Field Secretary on matters relating to missionaries.

In the case of overseas correspondence on personnel, the Bishop shall receive copies of the Field Secretary's letters, and in the case of overseas correspondence on general church matters, the Field Secretary shall receive copies of the Bishop's letters.

<u>Bishop</u>	<u>Field Secretary</u>
Placement	Recruitment
Work Assignments	Employment Permits
Job Description	Travel, to and from field
Job Instructions	Arrival and departure details
Job Evaluation	Welcome and farewell details
Allocation of Housing	Unit soft furnishings*
Institutional household furniture	Unit and personal transportation*
Institutional transportation	Passports and visas
Approval of furlough and leave	Tax Clearance
Spiritual counseling	Medical care
	Counsel re: children's education
	Counsel re: B.F.M. conditions of service
	Counsel re: local holiday
	Plan missionary social activities
	Plan missionary retreats
	Spiritual counseling
	* in consultation with appropriate institutional head and treasurer controlling funds for missionary maintenance.

## Appendix 6a

### OBJECTIVES AND GOALS - BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH IN AFRICA

(As presented to General Conference - 1970)

Definitions pertaining to the objectives and goals:

- Church - Brethren in Christ
- Objectives - Long-range targets
- Goals - Short-range milestones that keep us moving toward our objectives

#### PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

- A. To establish a strong self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating church in Africa;
- B. To fulfill the Great Commission of Christ by extending the witness of Christ to all unevangelized near and far;
- C. To nurture all the members in the Word of God so that they become mature, soul-winning and church-supporting members.

#### SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

- A. To train mature leadership in all sectors of the administration of the church;
- B. To train ministers, pastors and evangelists for spiritual leadership in the congregation;
- C. To provide opportunity for study, growth and service for all converts to Christ, whether young or old.

#### GOALS TOWARD OUR OBJECTIVES

##### A. Administrative Goals

- 1. We should have a complete membership roll by our 1971 Conference and that thereafter a complete programme of follow up in the local church keeps the membership roll current -- up to date.

(Responsible for Implementation - PASTOR)

- 2. The establishment of two new fully-organized churches in each district each year.

(Responsible for Implementation - DISTRICT  
SUPERINTENDENTS)

- 3. An Administrative structure by 1972 reaching to the local pastor so that no administrator is directly responsible for more than six people.

(Responsible for Implementation - BISHOPS, THE CHURCH  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES)

Objectives and Goals - Africa (contd.)

-2-

B. Financial Goals

1. Capital Goals

- a. By 1972 an urban church in Salisbury -- one in Lusaka;
- b. Another church in each country by 1975;
- c. Two new churches in each district each year.

(Responsible for Implementation - THE WHOLE CHURCH)

2. Recurrent Financial Goals

- a. The Brethren in Christ Church in Africa should be financially independent, except for the support of the Bishops and the Bible Schools by 1972 and our financial independence should be complete by 1980.

(Responsible for Implementation - EVERY CHURCH MEMBER  
INCLUDING EVEN THE CHILDREN)

C. Evangelistic Goals

1. We should have two or more prayer cells in half of the churches in each district by December 1971, and in every church by December 1972.
2. New Life for All Instruction Classes in one-fourth of the churches in each district by March 1972; in half of them by March 1973 and in all of them by March 1974.
3. By October following the Instruction Classes every home visited in New Life for All outreach within three miles of each village church and within five blocks of every urban church. All areas considered to be the responsibility of the Brethren in Christ Church to be completely covered by October 1974.

(Responsible for Implementation - BISHOPS, CHURCH  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES, DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS,  
LOCAL PASTORS AND PEOPLE)

4. Personnel be found and plans be laid for such a ministry into Botswana from Rhodesia by 1973 and from Zambia by 1974.

D. Training and Nurture Goals

1. That every local pastor who is not already Bible School-trained should receive some help by 1972.

(Responsible for Implementation - BIBLE SCHOOLS)

Objectives and Goals - Africa (contd.)

-3-

2. The members of one-fourth of the churches in each district should be instructed in New Life for All evangelism by March 1972, of one-half of the churches by March 1973, and of all churches by March 1973.

(Responsible for Implementation - DISTRICT  
SUPERINTENDENTS, LOCAL PASTORS)

3. Every convert is to be encouraged and assisted by a suitable more mature Christian of as near the same age and standing as possible. He should, in addition, be given special nurture by the pastor.

(Responsible for Implementation - PASTORS)

E. Membership Goals

1. We should reduce our membership losses by 5% per year for each of the next four years -- 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974.

(Responsible for Implementation - PASTORS, BISHOPS  
AND CHURCH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES)

F. Spiritual Goals

1. We should confess that we have been guilty of coldness, indifference and personal sin.
2. We must have a revival of prayer till prayer is more than a form, till it is an all-embracing cry of the whole being.
3. We should have a renewed interest in the study of the Word of God.
4. We need a burden -- a real concern for the souls around us who are dying without Christ.

(Responsible for Implementation - FROM THE BISHOPS  
AND CHURCH LEADERS TO THE LOCAL CHURCH MEMBER)

May God burn within us -- on our hearts -- a dedication to see these veiled hopes become reality in 1971, 1972, 1973, and 1974.

1/5/71

## Appendix 7

*Itinerary of the African Education Commission Phelps Stokes Fund*  
East Africa, December 29, 1923 to August 25, 1924

